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INDEPENDENT

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Extravagance is back in fashion

Reports from the Paris catwalks

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Tory summit on 'feelgood factor' crisis

Major offensive as polls slump

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major has summoned senior ministers to a Cabinet summit meeting tomorrow to try to solve the mystery of the missing "feelgood factor".

Ministers are anxious because the Tories have failed to gain an improvement in the opinion polls despite the fact that the factors for a recovery are all in place, including interest rates at their lowest level for a generation, inflation at its lowest for half a century, and the housing market starting to take off.

Mr Major is frustrated about the failure of the economic "good news" to convince the electorate. Morale among Tory MPs remains at rock bottom and many admit they expect defeat at the next general election over Labour's campaign message that it is "time for a change".

The Prime Minister is concerned that economic good news, traditionally seen as a vote winner for governments at the end of their term, may not give the Tories high on the agenda will be job insecurity, with one in four of the working population having tasted unemployment since the election in 1992.

Ministers are preparing to target the Labour leadership as part of the fight-back and senior Tory figures have indicated they are ready for a dirty campaign. They are looking for a narrow but decisive victory for Labour similar to the Harry Harman row.

Ministers plan to exploit splits in the Labour Party over Mr Harman. As the Cabinet is meeting, the Parliamentary

Labour Party will be debating a call to bring forward the Shadow Cabinet election from November to July, which could lead to Ms Harman being voted out.

Tony Blair could face the dilemma of appointing Ms Harman to his team, and risk a new rift with Labour MPs who are still angry with her, over the decision to send her son to a grammar school.



Tony Blair, Tories will try to exploit divisions in his party

The key item on the Cabinet agenda will be a strategy for dealing with the appeal of the Labour leader to wavering Tory voters, by insisting Labour has not dropped Socialism, in spite of its repackaging as "new Labour".

The head of the Conservative research department, Danny Finkelstein, who has mapped out the strategy, has taken ministers to task over the way they deal with Mr Blair. When the Labour leader launched his "stakeholder economy", he was attacked for stealing Conservative policy by Michael Portillo, who was in Japan, while

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, said there was a hidden Socialist agenda.

Mr Finkelstein will advise the Cabinet to stop claiming Mr Blair is a closet Conservative. Tory leaders will be told to stress the Labour Party is sticking to Socialist policies. Ministers will be urged to counter attempts by Labour to jettison unpopular policies, such as the abolition of GP fundholding and selection in schools. The campaign will run a Labour score campaign.

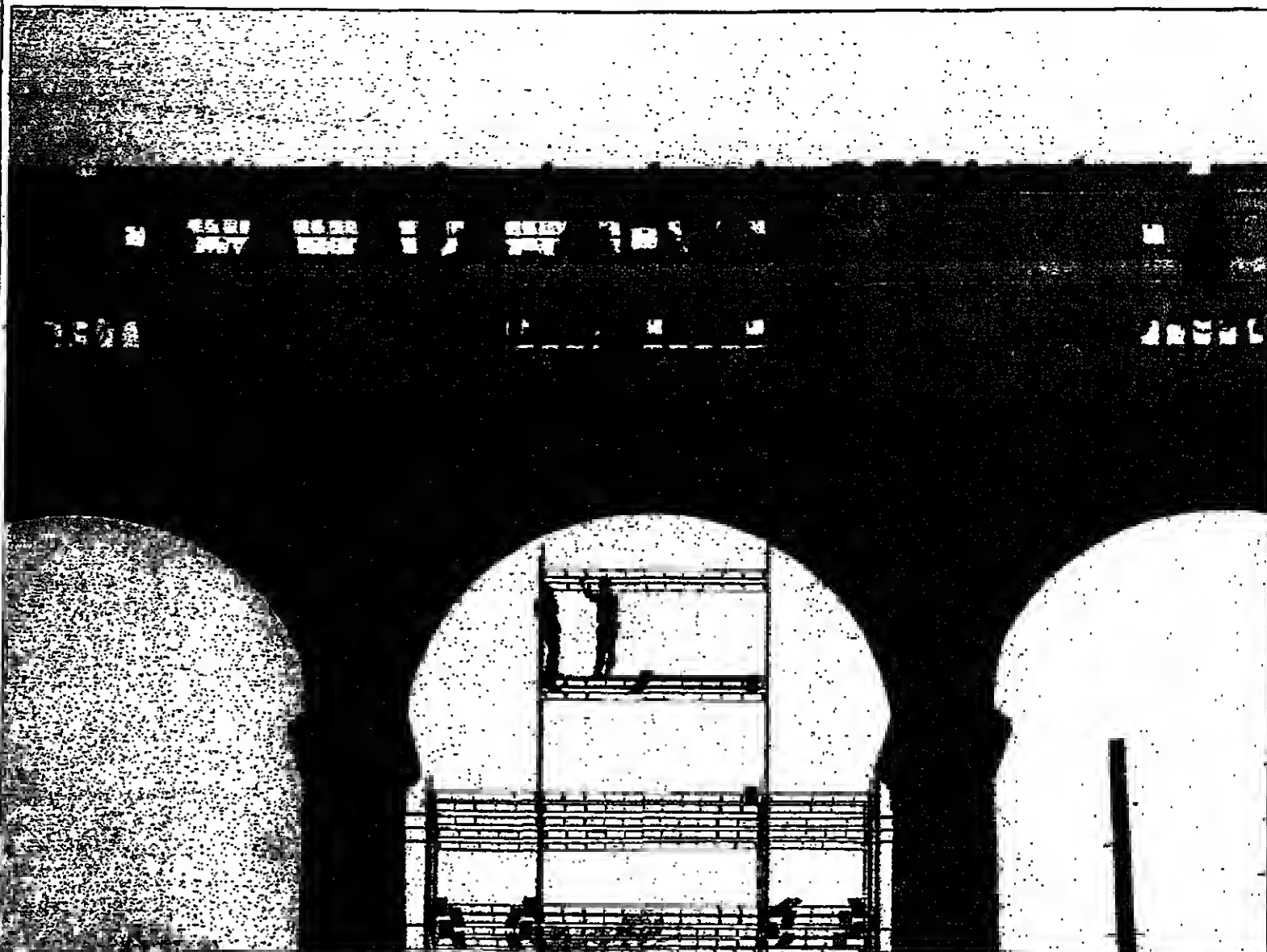
Mr Major will try to raise the Tories' appeal in a speech tomorrow to the Social Market Foundation, outlining his vision for an "opportunity Britain". Mr Blair also plans a speech on Labour's plans for small businesses - traditionally seen as Tory supporters.

Some senior ministers believe the Scott inquiry into the arms-to-Iraq affair blew the Government off course.

The Tories intend to use the spring council meeting in Harrogate as the launch-pad for a fight-back. Cabinet ministers will be asked to speak on the first day, including Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, Mr Heseltine, and Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman. Mr Major will speak on Saturday before flying to Turin for the IGC.

Mr Clarke is digging in his heels against a referendum which his Cabinet colleagues believe may unite the party. Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, yesterday used evidence to the Foreign Affairs Commons select committee to kill speculation the Government could ignore the results of a referendum on a single European currency.

Waterloo for BR as French take over



French connection: A Network SouthCentral train crosses the Ouse Valley viaduct on its way from London to Brighton

Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

A French company is expected to be given the franchise to run one of Britain's busiest commuter rail networks.

Compagnie Générale des Eaux is expected to be told by the franchising director, Roger Salmon, it has become the sole preferred bidder for the franchise for Network SouthCentral, which runs the train services from Victoria and London Bridge stations to the south coast between Hastings and Southampton and many shorter suburban routes.

The French conglomerate already has significant interests in the UK, including the Onyx street cleaning and refuse collection services and several small water companies with a total of 3 million customers.

It narrowly missed out on winning the franchise for South West Trains last month but this time it has beaten off a combined challenge from Stagecoach, which won the South West franchise, and another bus company, National Express.

National Express is thought to be the favourite to win the franchise for Midland Main Line, the InterCity services out of St Pancras, also due to be announced this week. But the third franchise of the final bid stage, Gatwick Express, is an open contest between the management buy-out team, which has linked up with British Airways, and Richard Branson's Virgin group.

Claims by Mr Branson that Virgin had won the franchise were being discounted last night by sources close to Mr Salmon. Both have agreed to pay to operate the line, rather than receive subsidy, as Gatwick Express is the only profitable franchise of the 25 on the network.

Currently, British Rail receives about £51m a year in subsidy to run Network SouthCentral services and the new operator is expected to receive about the same amount initially, but a reduced amount each year over the period of the seven-year franchise.

On Friday *The Independent* revealed that the Bermuda-based ferry company, Sea Containers, had won the franchise for the East Coast Main Line. South West Trains and Great Western Trains, the first two privatised lines, started operating under their new operators on 4 February and the four new private operators are expected to take over from BR within the next couple of months.



Water firm 'planned to move 1m people'

PAUL FIELD

Yorkshire Water asked local authorities to consider a plan to evacuate up to a million people from their homes and businesses as last summer's drought hit water supplies in the region, an inquiry was told yesterday.

The extent of the crisis was such that lives would have been lost, schools closed and businesses plunged into financial crisis if reservoirs had run dry and standpipes and rota cuts been introduced, it was claimed.

The grim picture was painted on the first day of a public inquiry into how Yorkshire Water dealt with the drought. The evacuation plan was ruled out by local authorities and the privatised water company had to top up supplies in a £3m a week tankering operation that ferried in 60 tons of water a day.

Yorkshire Water, whose managing director Trevor Newton announced his resignation last week, was plagued by claims that a quarter of supplies were lost through leakage and it was ill equipped to tackle the crisis.

The independent inquiry, chaired by Professor John Uff, a barrister and water engineer is expected to last two weeks. The hearing at Leeds Town Hall was told that the Department of the Environment has no plans to submit a report despite an invitation to do so. Ofwat, the water regulator, has announced it is carrying out its own inquiry into the crisis.

In its submission presented yesterday, Bradford Council said the evacuation option was a desperate measure suggested by Yorkshire Water after it ruled out the use of tankers to bring in supplies. That decision



Cracking up: An arid view of Fawcett Reservoir, the feeder reservoir for Bradford, near Blubberhouses in North Yorkshire

was later reversed. Bradford said last night that the evacuation plan was "judicious".

Tony Kilner, representing Bradford Council told the inquiry: "Yorkshire Water had no

emergency plans for a drought situation. With the prospect of standpipes it could have been disastrous." The effect of rationing would be devastating, he added: "Public services

would have been stretched to breaking point. Social services believe the effects of rota cuts would have been catastrophic."

Schools would have been forced to close because teachers would have been unable to maintain minimum standards of hygiene in the classroom.

Dr Chris Worth, director of public health for the West Yorkshire Health Authority, said Yorkshire Water failed to foresee the serious public health implications of a reduction or possible cessation of water supplies.

"The health and well being of the population at large of West Yorkshire were under serious threat had the proposed rota cuts gone ahead. Lives could have been lost."

The Yorkshire Water Chamber of Commerce told the inquiry its members suffered losses in preparing for the worst

case scenario and blamed Yorkshire Water. "There was a slow reaction throughout. They were praying for rain."

John Holroyd, a barrister representing Yorkshire Water, made it clear that the company would robustly defend its handling of the drought although he admitted there were lessons to be learned. He emphasised its position should be considered against a background of low rainfall and increased demand which led to the rapid depletion of reservoirs.

He claimed the Yorkshire Water has been able to reduce the probability of rota cuts with an £100m programme of new pipelines and pumping stations.

Yorkshire Water last night issues a statement denying the claims by Bradford council had ever been discussed at senior level.

IN BRIEF

Heroin 'epidemic'

Britain is on the verge of a heroin epidemic with seizures of the drug up 80 per cent to a record total last year. Page 6

Rose West appeals

No direct evidence linked Rose West with the 10 murders she was convicted of at a trial on which the media had had "a major influence." The Court of Appeal heard. Page 5



Mandela: Winnie made me the loneliest man

ROBERT BLOCK
Johannesburg

There was a fleeting moment when the sadness left Nelson Mandela's face at his divorce trial in Johannesburg yesterday. It was when his estranged wife, Winnie, first entered the courtroom. He caught sight of her, and for a moment, smiled. She, in response, turned away.

If there were any lingering doubts in the South African President's mind over his decision to end his 38 years with a woman whom he once worshipped, they must have faded away in that moment.

It was not long after that Mr Mandela told a court packed with journalists, television cameras and the curious: "If the entire universe persuaded me to reconcile with the defendant I would not... I am determined to get rid of the marriage."

Once the icons of the anti-apartheid struggle, Nelson and Winnie Mandela are almost certain to be, finally and officially, divorced.

Mr Mandela's lawyer, Wim Trengove, argued that the President's marriage was beyond repair. He said Mr Mandela rejected his estranged wife's assertion that any arbitration

could bring the two back together. There was Mr Trengove said, simply nothing to salvage.

But it took the man himself to bring home that message. Composed but visibly sorrowful, Mr Mandela told how his wife accomplished in two years what 27 years in prison failed to achieve: she made him feel humiliated and lonely. "Ever since I came back from prison, not once has the defendant ever entered our bedroom while I was awake," the 77-year-old President told the Rand Supreme Court in Johannesburg.

"The bedroom is where a man and woman discuss the

most intimate details. There were so many things I wanted to discuss with her, but she is the type of person who fears confrontation. I was the loneliest man during the period I stayed with her."

The President initiated divorce proceedings in 1992, two years after his release from jail. Mr Mandela told the court that it was her "brutal conduct" which convinced him to end the marriage. He then recounted how in August 1992 he was given a letter supposedly written by Mrs Mandela which confirmed his suspicions of her infidelity with a young lawyer

from the African National Congress. He said had tried to make the parting as painless as possible for the benefit of their two daughters, Zindzi and Zenani, but felt compelled to disclose the affair. "I did not wish to wash our dirty linen in public," he said.

Mr Mandela will be questioned today by his wife's lawyer. Mrs Mandela is expected to take the stand tomorrow when her counter claim to assess her husband's estate is heard; she is seeking at least half. It may be a small price compared to what the President said she has already taken.

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Privatised benefits offices in shambles

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

A privatisation contract to run part of the Benefits Agency has resulted in a shambles, with performance targets not being met and officials expressing doubts it is yielding any savings at all, according to a management consultants' report prepared for the Agency.

So bad have things become, says the report, a copy of which has been passed to the Independent, that "relationships between all parties are strained. There is a lack of goodwill and a lack of trust."

The report from In Depth Consulting focuses on the three-year contract to BET, the giant office services group - currently the subject of a £1.9bn takeover bid from Rentokil - to run the back offices of the Benefits Agency in Lancashire and Cumbria.

BET's brief was to handle typing, open the mail, run the messenger service, ensure stationery supplies were up to demand and operate security for the Agency's branches across the region, starting in January last year. The result, concludes the report, was a disaster. In Blackpool, the report says, the company did not provide adequate security cover. A security guard "persistently failed to intervene to prevent anti-social behaviour by [Agency] customers," writes In Depth, adding that overall security "is an area of concern."

Benefits Agency staff were also left without stationery and, last September, BET failed to meet 43 per cent of the targets set for opening post from claimants. This was caused by

"under-resourcing on the part of the contractor" and, the report acknowledges, the mail-bag being greater than expected. Another disaster area was typing. Again, writes In Depth, "BET under-resourcing appears to be a key factor. Typists are frequently taken to cover switchboard and post-opening duties..."

If problems arise BET staff were reluctant to raise the issues with management "as they fear that this will rebound on them and be taken as an indication of their own inefficiency." What In Depth describes as "anecdotal information" suggests "BET quality assurance amounts to disciplinary action against the individual if a problem is raised". In one of the most telling phrases, BET's staff, says the report, "have feelings of frustration with BET equal to those of the customers."

To get around the shortcomings, Agency staff are ordering stationery direct, doing their own typing, and opening mail themselves. This is likely to defeat the object of contracting out and cast doubt over the value of the privatisation.

John Hutton, MP for Barrow and Furness, who obtained the In Depth report, said it revealed "the triumph of political dogma over common sense". It was obvious, he said, that the promised savings to the taxpayer from allowing BET to run the services was "just not materialising".

A BET spokesman said the report related to "start-up difficulties". Staff numbers, he said, had since been increased. "Inevitably," he added, "when a new supplier comes on site there is a lot of learning to be done."

Hunt escapes action over playground kill

Police are taking no further action against a fox hunt which allowed its hounds to kill a fox in a school playground.

Children aged between five and ten watched the fox being torn apart through a classroom window at Langcliffe primary school in the Yorkshire Dales last week. The hounds jumped a wall into the playground to catch their quarry.

The headteacher Hilary Foster said she was "horrified and appalled" by the incident which

had left some of her 44 pupils "shaken" and "frightened".

Eddie Brathwaite, chairman of the Lanesdale Hunt, said the hounds became separated during a chase and deeply regretted a playground killing. "We are holding a special meeting to ensure it doesn't happen again."

A spokesman for North Yorkshire police said the hunt had apologised to the school. "They don't make a habit of this so that is the end of the matter as far as we are concerned."

Rock of ages: More shock 'n roll in store as Seventies anti-heroes make comeback



The boys are back: From left, Sex Pistols Paul Cook, John Lydon, Steve Jones and Glen Matlock celebrate yesterday. Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

Pistols at dawn of a new era

It was the usual thing. Loud-speakers played a medley of patriotic numbers from the Second World War, while six-foot transvestite waitresses passed around bacon-burgers, served from metal film canisters. Much what you would expect from a press showing in the red-walled basement of the 100 Club in London's Oxford Street.

About three hundred of us were crushed into this airless hole - with any distinction between passive and active smoking purely academic - to herald the relaunch of the Sex Pistols. Earnest foreigners, holders of degrees and diplomas in the semology of British rock, rubbed shoulders and everythings else with celebrity journalists, photographers and elderly hangers-on from the demi-monde of popular music.

The Bill Grundy interview of 1 December 1976 (a date that will live in infamy) was being reshown. Only five years of the Osmonds' and David Cassidy could possibly have galled seventies Britain into believing the Pistols were obscene and a threat to society. The fresh-faced Lydon et al clearly embarrassed, were manipulated into saying "shit" on screen. The credits told us the producer had been a Tony Bulley.

Downwind, behind a wall of expensive aftershave, leather

jackets and bouffant hairpieces, came the first approaching sounds of the boys themselves. "Wherr", it went. And "whoa, whigh, whorr". The crowd parted and a small group of nice-looking chaps in early middle age, clutching beer bottles, made their way to a low dais. So there they were, the anarchists and the anti-christs: John Lydon aka Johnny Rotten, Paul Cook, Glen Matlock and Steve Jones - together again. Lydon, as ever the sharpest, his hair shaped into a "McLaren", attempting to escape upwards from his head, retails the pre-hensile upper lip and rodentine teeth of his youth. His slightly bulkier frame was squeezed into a sleeveless red hunting jerkin, decorated with horizontal leather tabs beneath which he wore a flowing white chemise. The ensemble could have been borrowed from Cliff's Wuthering Heights.

If Rotten exuded a mellow acerbity, his mates were genu-



Anarchy reigns: The Pistols sign a record deal outside Buckingham Palace in 1977 with Syd Vicious pictured centre and former manager Malcom McLaren with hands in pocket

inely avuncular. Uncles Paul and Steve, with their craggy schoolboy looks, are dead-ringers for Robson and Jerome. Uncle Glen reminds one of Joe Bugner. The threat was potent - if you upset them, they might tickle you.

It was question time. Listings agents wanted to know would they be playing Belfast, Glasgow, Milton Keynes, Amster-

dam? They would, except for Holland which could "elf off". A French journalist asked if anarchy was returning to the UK? She was (rightly) ignored. What about Sid Vicious (deceased 1979), asked another. "His ashes were scattered at Heathrow, so we'd need a Hoover," replied Lydon. Why do it all over again? "Since we split up no-one has done bollocks all to change the

world. A bit harsh on Tony Blair, I thought. "Sting will you be playing Roxanne," called out one wag. Finally, what about his loyal fans? Did he have a message? He did. "I want you all to come to Finsbury Park. I hope it rains and your wheelchairs get stuck in the mud". I would, Johnny, but I've promised to take the kids to a puppet show.

Parents seen as key to fighting illiteracy

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

The way to end illiteracy among children is to end it among parents, says government-funded research published yesterday.

The study shows that family literacy programmes where parents, grandparents and children work together are extremely successful in improving reading and writing.

Researchers from the National Foundation for Educational Research looked at four literacy programmes for parents at the bottom of the educational heap and their children, aged three to six. Most of the children had low scores in language and risked educational failure.

The 361 parents and 392 children attended courses of eight hours a week for 12 weeks. The study found the proportion of children who would have struggled with reading at school fell from two-thirds to just over a third. The proportion of children with the most severe reading difficulties fell from 24 per cent to 9 per cent. There were similar improvements in children's vocabulary.

Parents' average reading score went up by 5 per cent and their writing score by 10 per cent. The study found that all the progress children and parents made was still being maintained nine months later. Many parents went on to further studies and felt more confident about helping their children at home.

Greg Brooks, who led the research team, said of the programmes set up by the Basic Skills Agency: "This is one of the most effective initiatives we have ever encountered."

The pilot projects cost £3m paid by the Welsh Office and the Department for Education and Employment.

Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, would not commit the Government to more funding but she told a London conference: "We have to look at something that is as successful as this very seriously. If this is the way to break the cycle of deprivation and other problems it has to be taken very seriously."

Mrs Shephard responded vigorously to reports that plans to introduce nursery vouchers have run into trouble because not enough private providers are interested in the scheme, which starts in four local authorities in autumn. She said 600 private and voluntary groups had come forward, 287 of them in Norfolk and the rest in the three pilot authorities. Twenty-two extra local authority nursery units are being set up in Norfolk.

COMING SOON

THE INDEPENDENT

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When Harry Met Sally for only £3 with The Independent on Saturday

Next Saturday 23 March sees the launch of one of the most exciting offers ever presented by a national newspaper. The video of When Harry Met Sally will be yours for only £3 when you buy the paper on Saturday. Each week you will be able to pick up a new video from your newsagent and build a classic film library.



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feature giving profiles of the stars and director and notes on the film. We will announce some of the films to be featured on Thursday on the film pages of The Independent.

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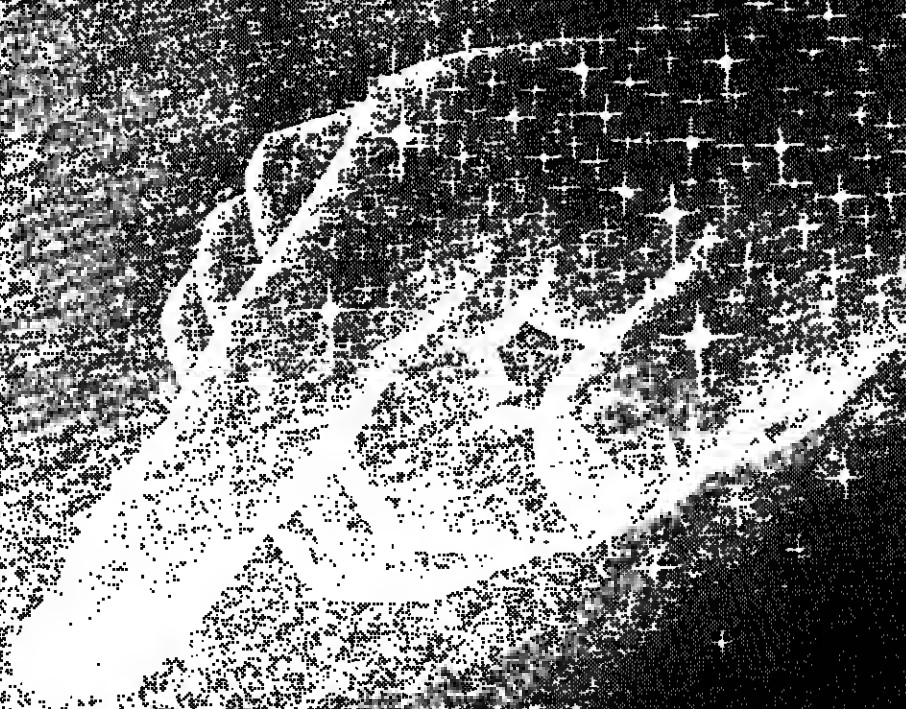
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news

Record heroin haul as gangs try to flood UK

JASON BENNETT
Crime Correspondent

Britain is on the verge of a heroin epidemic with seizures of the drug up 80 per cent to a record total last year, it was revealed yesterday.

Investigators believe drug traffickers are trying to flood the United Kingdom with heroin in an attempt to create a bigger more profitable market.

Customs officers and the police also announced yesterday that in 1995 they recovered the biggest ever quantity of drugs in a single year. A record 35.6 tonnes of drugs were seized –

about £458m worth – up 9 per cent on 1994.

There has also been a resurgence in the popularity of the dance drug ecstasy. In 1995, the amount seized rose by about 17 per cent to the equivalent of 2 million tablets, worth about £30m at street prices.

But it is the huge increase in seizures of heroin – 1,118 kilograms, or enough for 658 million injections – that is causing the greatest single concern.

Dick Kellaway, Customs & Excise chief investigator, warned: "All the evidence – Customs seizures, police seizures and reports from those close to

the users – points to a massive increase in the volume of heroin being targeted on the UK. We believe that the increase is supply-led in the sense that heroin is being imported in order to create a market. Potentially this is the most serious drug problem that all of us face."

Heroin is now the most common class A drug. Most of it comes from opium grown in Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and arrives via countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary.

Most of the trafficking gangs in the UK are Turkish, Asian

and Afghan. About 20 Turkish gangs are running the bulk of the multi-million pound heroin trade with their main stronghold in north London. The drug is usually sold on to white drug gangs and dealers for distribution in the big cities.

A wrap of heroin costs between £10 and £15, and police believe an increasing number of young people are choosing it as their first choice drug. The trend was highlighted in the current hit film *Trainspotting*.

Customs says there is no sign of the overall upward trend abating. Police have also warned of a drug-gang culture

similar to the United States developing unless action is taken.

Keith Hellawell, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire and Chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers' drugs sub-committee, also highlighted the growing threat to the young. He said the death of 18-year-old ecstasy victim Leah Bais had brought home the extent of the problem.

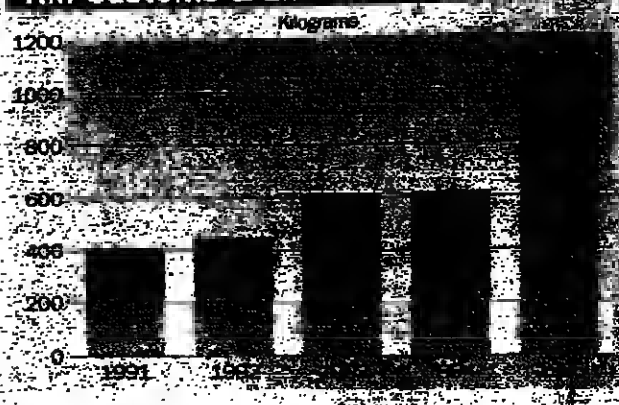
While seizures of ecstasy rose to 544kg, those for amphetamine dropped from about a quarter to 527kg and for LSD by more than a half to 31,000 doses. The rise in ecstasy is partly blamed on the growth of im-

ported, drugs from Holland, Belgium and France.

Surprisingly the amount of cocaine seized is down by more than half on last year to 940kg – about £10m at street prices. However, Customs and Excise believe the trend is still going up and the drop is a statistical blip resulting from three unusually large seizures in 1994.

Cannabis still makes up the bulk of drugs seized – more than 80 per cent of the total. For the first time, the figures include drug seizures at the Channel tunnel. In 1995, there were 12 major seizures with a total street value of £8m.

HM Customs & Excise Heroin seizures



'Vet's 100 dogs lived in filth as wild pack'

A vet kept 100 dogs in such appalling conditions at her home that some had no eyes and others had stumps for legs, a court was told yesterday.

Three inches of filth was caked on the floors at Helen Hein's cottage near Guildford, Surrey, and in-breeding among the dogs had led to hideous deformities, it was claimed. Dr Hein, 69, is charged by the RSPCA with causing unnecessary suffering to the dogs.

Familial magistrates were told at the start of a five-day trial that Dr Hein bred German shepherds in filthy conditions. Many ran wild and formed packs. They were diseased and deformed. The vet, who denies a total of 19 charges of causing unnecessary suffering to the animals, was a former research



Dr Hein: RSPCA said dogs in 'appalling conditions'

veterinary surgeon employed by the Ministry of Agriculture.

She illegally bred dogs for sale at her secluded cottage at Newlands Corner because she was not a licensed breeder.

The charges were brought after RSPCA inspectors visited her home more than half a dozen times in October and November 1994 and March 1995.

Alan Kurtz, for the prosecution, warned magistrates that the evidence they would hear would be very distressing. Inspectors found dogs with missing eyes, sores and cuts and one animal hobbling around with a stump for a back leg. The court was told how every room in the house was covered in excrement

and filth and was over-run by dogs which had gone wild.

He said: "Her belief that the dogs should neither be castrated or spayed led to an ever-increasing population of these animals. At the time, they were living in deplorable conditions, wholly unsuitable, insanitary, squalid, deep in excrement and urine and other residue."

"The fact that the defendant is a qualified vet only makes the matter worse because it's clear she ought to have known better. I have little doubt she is extremely fond of them, perhaps even obsessed by them. The dogs have become part of her life."

Dr Hein listened intently as the allegations were read out. Mr Kurtz said the dogs had split into packs like wild animals and one pack had taken control of the staircase as their territory. He said that on one visit by the RSPCA it seemed as if one of the sickest dogs had been hidden in a caravan lavatory. "It was in a space 2ft square without ventilation or water. Zinta (the dog) had a large pressure sore at the end of a stump of a leg," Mr Kurtz said.

The court was told how one of the dogs called Cuddy could not use its back legs and had to drag itself around the room.

RSPCA inspector Alison MacVicar described how on several visits she had been stunned at the condition of the animals. "The whole situation was appalling. The dogs were covered in mud and faeces and several newborn litters were on the premises."

"I visited on 2 March, 1995, to make a full inventory. In a back bedroom, I was absolutely appalled. There were three inches of solid faeces on the floor which if you walked on it did not leave a footprint."

"There was no water and the only food I saw was scattered on the floors. In the kitchen there were between 10 and 15 dogs including puppies. Three dogs were of particular concern, one puppy had a bite wound to its face. This was a fresh bite. It had lost its left eye," Miss MacVicar said she also inspected several outdoor kennels and found similar horrific scenes. The trial continues.

Supermodels show the timeless grace of a legendary name



Classic glamour: Claudia Schiffer models a tweed suit with reflective lining turned out at collar and sleeves by Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel (left) and (right) Stella Tennant wears a brocade evening dress, also by Lagerfeld for Chanel, in Paris yesterday Photographs: AFP/Sheridan Morley



Naval officer stole to fund betting

A high-flying officer who fiddled £21,000 from Royal Navy coffers to help fund his gambling addiction was jailed for four months by a court martial yesterday.

Graham Woodworth, 38, a former navy commander, was also dismissed from the service after he falsely claimed for boarding school allowances for his three children.

The court at HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, was told that the officer, who served on the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal and at the Ministry of Defence Institute in London, became addicted to betting on horses during a student summer in a bookmaker's.

Lt Cdr John Flanagan, for the prosecution, said that Woodworth, from Portsmouth, had misappropriated £12,462 in boarding school allowances paid to him to help fund the education of his children, Stuart, Dale and Angela.

Lt Cdr Flanagan said Woodworth had also stolen £2,655.12 paid as a lodging allowance. He was supposed to be living at a house in Muswell Hill, north London, while working at the Institute of Naval Oceanography and Meteorology, but was instead commuting from his Portsmouth home.

Investigators were alerted when Woodworth failed to show up for work one day. They went to the address in Muswell Hill but found Woodworth had not lived there for some time, and when they interviewed him about the matter they found discrepancies with his allowances.

Woodworth also falsified receipts from boarding schools in Ardingly, Sussex and Benridge, Isle of Wight, where his three children were being educated, to claim advance payment of school fees totalling £5,970.

Woodworth pleaded guilty to one charge of theft, four charges brought under the Naval Discipline Act of misappropriating school allowances, two charges of false remittance advice for the two schools and an eighth count of allowing a lodger to stay in his Portsmouth naval married quarters without official permission.

For the defence, Mr Bradley Albury said Woodworth's gambling problems stemmed from his family, who were left homeless 35 years ago because of his father's betting addiction.

"It was like a drug addiction, and looking back over the last five or six years he is now aware how serious a problem he had. He started as a social gambler and it became a compulsion," said Mr Albury.

Although his client was attending Gamblers Anonymous, Mr Albury said of the problem: "It is like a drink problem – he fears could come back to haunt him and he accepts he still has a problem."

Mr Albury said Woodworth was described by colleagues and fellow officers as a "high-flier who had the naval world at his feet". But he had allowed his career to be blighted by his gambling addiction.

President of the court martial, Captain Simon Goodall, told him: "There's no disguising the fact that you are the architect of your own downfall. You have woven a web of deceit which has entangled your entire family and other unsuspecting people."

"The root cause has been your addiction to gambling but this does not alter the stark fact that you have been dishonest. The service relies on honesty and trust and you have abused that trust."

Woodworth was also ordered to have his pay stopped until he had repaid £2,655 and to suffer the financial penalties from his dismissal. They include his £43,000-a-year salary, his married quarters in Portsmouth and a £100,000 pension lump sum.

Woman golf champion 'treated differently' over club punch-up

A women's golf champion, sacked after punching a fellow club member off his bar stool, yesterday claimed she would have been treated differently if she were a man. Philomena Vaughan, 42, denied exaggerating the incident, which later earned her the nicknames "Mohammed Ali" and "Rocky".

Cross-examined at a resumed industrial tribunal, Mrs Vaughan, a three times club champion, insisted that during a trophy presentation night at the Dew-stow golf club, Gwent, businessman John Price, 49, slid his hand under her waistcoat and rubbed his hand up and down her thigh.

When she told him to stop,

Mr Price said something and then flicked his hand towards her face. "I put my hand up to fend him off and then hit him on the side of his face."

At an earlier hearing, the Cardiff tribunal was told Mrs Vaughan was first suspended and then sacked two months later as manager of the golf shop for gross misconduct following a row with the club's owner and chairman, Elwyn Harris, over his handling of the issue.

Mrs Vaughan of Rogiet, Gwent, claims unfair dismissal and also sex discrimination because Mr Price was not treated in the same way after the incident. "What upset me most was that the golf club didn't inter-

view me that night to find out what happened... Obviously, they didn't believe me at the time."

Former club harmaid Sonya Harris (no relation to Mr Harris), 24, described hearing Mr Price point out to Mrs Vaughan that she had something on her dress. "I then saw Mr Price lean forward and put his hand on her left thigh. Mrs Vaughan said something like 'Don't touch me', then I remember Mr Price waved his hand in front of her as if he was dismissing her allegation."

Mrs Vaughan had reacted by twice poking him in the shoulder area. "To me it looked like he lost his balance and went

back off the stool and fell on the floor," Miss Harris said.

Questioned by Philip Marshall, for the club, Mrs Vaughan denied she had had a lot to drink at the evening. "Everything happened as I said," she added. She strongly denied allegations that she called the club committee "sods".

Mrs Vaughan, whose case is backed by the Equal Opportunities Commission, has told the tribunal how she refused to sign a letter from Mr Price agreeing that there had been no assault. In his evidence Mr Price, of Caldicot, Gwent, denied ever raising his hand to Mrs Vaughan or touching her. The case continues.

McFlights take burgers on to a different plane

ROS WYNNE-JONES

"This is your captain speaking on the McPlane flight from Zurich to Palma. Big Macs and milkshakes will now be served."

Not content with providing burger bars across the world's holiday destinations, McDonald's will shortly take to the sky in a big red aeroplane.

The aircraft, dubbed McPlane in Britain and the Flying Ketchup in Switzerland, where the idea was conceived, makes its maiden voyage on 1 April. But the bright red 161-seat aircraft, with McDonald's emblazoned across the fuselage and a trademark yellow "M" on the tail, is an earnest attempt by the

fast food giant to make "flights fun for families" and to trail-blaze the company's name across the heavens.

The joint venture between McDonald's Switzerland, charter company Crossair and Hotelplan, the Swiss tour operators, will feature a McDonald's Douglas MD-81 aircraft customised to create an "ambience close to that of a McDonald's restaurant", but with red leather seats for comfort.

However, a large fries will be out of the question at the Flying McDonald's. The company is anxious to avoid a chip-pan fire at 30,000ft and counter service will be replaced by conventional meals on a plate.

Crossair, a subsidiary of Switzerland's national airline, Swissair, usually specialises in upmarket charter flights for business clients, with flight attendants serving champagne rather than Chicken McNuggets. A spokeswoman said: "It is moving downmarket for us, in a way, but we were glad to be doing something different, with families in mind."

"Children get very bored and we would be offering them souvenirs, a certificate and toys, as well as a McDonald's-style meal."

Children will be able to visit the cockpit, under supervision, with a range of holiday souvenirs on sale to complete the outing.

Numbers up as BT rings in a new service for the home

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

BT is testing a service which could assign up to 16 telephone numbers to a single incoming line, making the phone ring differently depending on which one is being called.

The system, now on trial in Glasgow, would let several people in the same house each have

an "assigned" ringing tone – for example the normal two short rings or two long rings. They would then know precisely who the phone was ringing for.

BT has had the system on trial since last July among a few hundred subscribers. The company says that its introduction nationwide is "a matter of when rather than if".

The move is part of an effort

to fight back against cable companies, which are using their own recently installed digital TV and telephone networks to offer a wide range of services.

Cambridge Cable, which owns four franchises covering a total of 500,000 homes, has been offering the same "multiple ring" service – identical since December at £6 per quarter per extra number

assigned to the line. Other cable companies are also planning to introduce the service.

The system uses a facility available through digital telephone exchanges by which a particular phone number does not have to be connected to an actual line. Alternatively, many numbers can be assigned to a single line, with a particular ringing pattern, controlled by the ex-

change nearest to the phone.

It could be used by somebody working at home who wanted to distinguish between incoming business and personal calls (which would be listed under different numbers in a phone-book) or by families who might want to offer teenagers a separate phone number.

Outgoing calls would still be charged to a single bill, but

itemised billing would make it possible to identify who made which calls.

"While the technical limit is 16 lines per phone, it gets increasingly difficult to distinguish who is being called as you add more," said a BT spokesman yesterday. "It's easiest with two, and then it gets progressively more complex." The problem is that the

exchange can vary the length of individual rings, but not their pitch.

Multiple-number facilities have been available for some years in the US, where digital exchanges have been in use for longer.

BT only converted its national network from older, analogue systems in the middle of last year.

Spotters await the comet of the century

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

Thousands of amateur astronomers are preparing their binoculars to watch what could be the brightest comet so far this century. Comet Hyakutake, discovered in January by a Japanese amateur, will be at its brightest by the end of this week, when it should be visible all night as a large, fuzzy patch a little smaller than the Moon. Besides being exceptionally bright for a comet, it will also pass very close – in cosmic terms – to the Earth. On Saturday it will be just 10 million miles away, having travelled hundreds of millions of miles through space on an elliptical orbit around the Sun that has probably taken centuries. It will then pass 20 million miles from the Sun before disappearing below the plane of the Solar System.

Although some comets have proved disappointingly dim after predictions that they would

light up the sky, experts are hopeful this will be different.

"It looks as though this is going to be very bright," said the noted astronomer Patrick Moore yesterday. "I don't think that it will be as big as the full moon, but part of that is because it is still approaching us. It will look more like a conventional comet – with a tail streaming behind it – next month, when it is moving away from us."

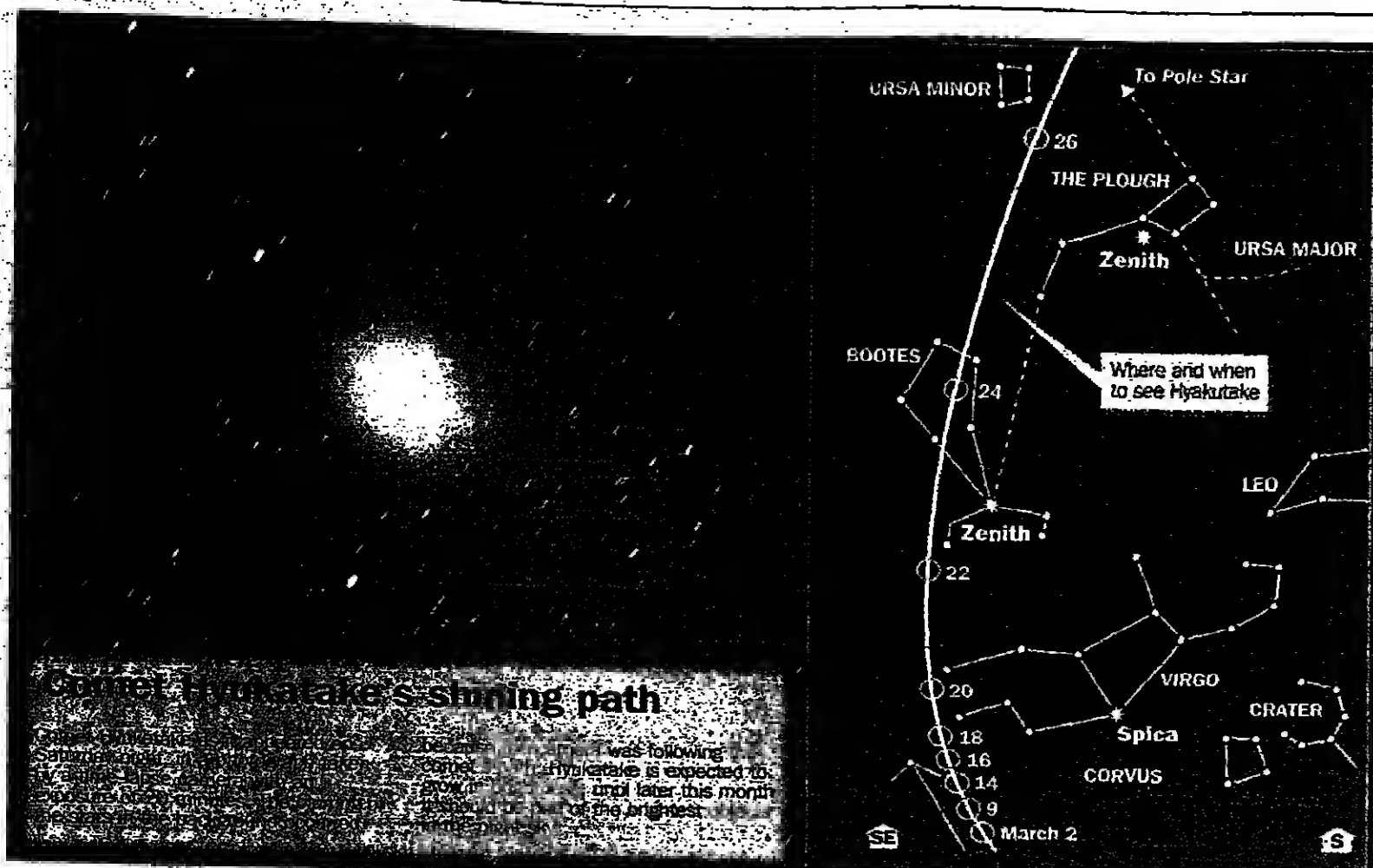
Comets are frozen bodies of gas, liquid and rocks a few miles across whose "tails" are created by streams vapourising as the Sun heats them up. The tail always points away from the Sun.

The comet is currently most visible in the early hours of the morning, after about 3am. It is best viewed using binoculars. "Telescopes don't have a wide enough field of view," said Mr Moore. But as the week progresses it will become brighter and more visible throughout more of the night as it moves towards the sky's North Pole.

Anyone wanting to see it should find a spot away from city lights and allow their eyes to adjust to the lower brightness of the stars. It should be possible to spot the comet using the star chart (see graphic).

Hyakutake is now expected to be the brightest comet for at least 20 years, and possibly since the turn of the century. It was discovered in January by Yuji Hyakutake, an amateur astronomer using a powerful pair of binoculars. At that time it showed up only as a faint smudge of light against the background of stars, but will now probably remain visible until May.

But even before Hyakutake has come fully into view, astronomers are preparing for the arrival next year of Comet Hale-Bopp, which will make its closest approach to the Sun on 1 April. It could eventually be brighter than Hyakutake, according to experts who spotted it beyond Jupiter's orbit last summer.



Stress 'hits 40 per cent of police officers'

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Nearly a quarter of police officers suffer severe psychological distress as a result of their day-to-day policing activities, according to a new study.

Overall 40 per cent of the force studied showed "significant" psychological distress, and reported a much higher level of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder than the general population.

Symptoms included: flashbacks to incidents, nightmares, inability to sleep or enjoy normal activities, and an over-reliance on alcohol and drugs. Women reported almost twice as many symptoms as men.

Officers with the longest service suffered the highest levels of distress, according to Jennifer Mitchell-Gibbs, an inspector in the Essex force, who with Dr Stuart Mitchell, a clinical psychologist at Harlepool General Hospital, surveyed 1,000 constables and sergeants from a force in south-east England.

"This is contrary to expectations. Officers don't become immune to traumatic events over time... the effect of stress is cumulative; a drip-drip effect and then it may be just one fatal accident too many that is the crunch," she said.

Death, major disasters, and incidents resulting in injury to themselves or colleagues, were the most common problems. However, attendance at a sudden death, a very common policing duty, was described as "very distressing", particularly for those contacting the relatives of the dead person. Some 23 per cent of officers displayed severe psychological distress.

The survey found there was a heavy emphasis on suppressing emotions, but this prevented officers from asking for help.

"It is part of the police culture to project strength, authority, resilience – the 'John Wayne syndrome'," Ms Mitchell-Gibbs told the first European Conference On Traumatic Stress In Emergency Services, Peace Keeping Operations and Humanitarian Aid Organisations in Sheffield yesterday.

The British force has adopted US practices of relying on critical incident debriefing and peer group counselling for officers in need of help. But officers in the survey said they wanted external help because they mistrusted their colleagues.

Ms Mitchell-Gibbs said that previous studies suggested that the British force was less vulnerable to stress generated by their daily duties, but found bureaucracy, their workload and bad relationships with colleagues more stressful.

The study confounds this view, Ms Mitchell-Gibbs said, and exposes the toll general policing takes on a force.

Another study presented at the conference which challenges accepted views, was that more than three-quarters of people with post-traumatic stress disorder have no previous history of psychiatric problems. However a significant number had suffered a major life experience – both good and bad – in the 12 months prior to the trauma which triggered PTSD.

The study of mental health patients in Nottingham revealed that the most common traumas included road accidents and assaults, and bad birth experiences for women.

DAILY POEM

Magnetism

By Miroslav Holub

When the Queen, over the magnetic lines of force on Faraday's rough table, asked And what use is it? Faraday replied, gazing lower than her lace collar:

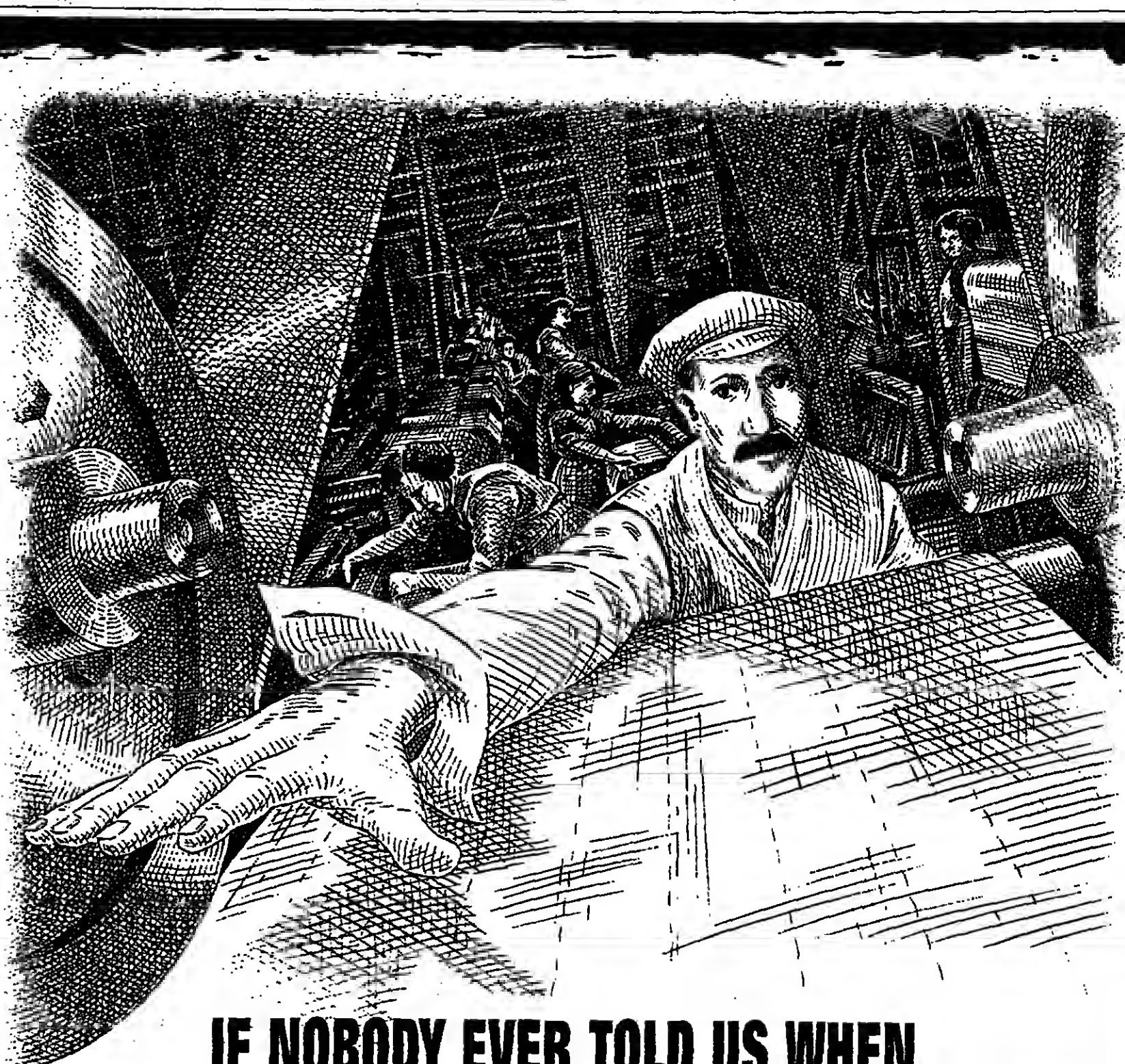
And what use, Ma'am, is a child?

It was a high point of science in history, because

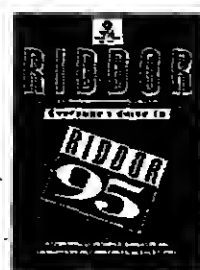
modern mankind is divided into those who understand gravitation and those who understand braces.

we either ask about everything, or we ask about nothing, in which case the universe originated in the Square of the Republic through the condensation of Saint Nicholas's deodorant.

This week is National Science Week, the third of its kind, led by the British Association for the Advancement of Science and designed to increase public understanding and interest in science. This poem is taken from a new collection, *Supposed to Fly* (Bloodaxe, £3.95), by Miroslav Holub. Holub is a rare creature: a leading Czech scientist and her most important poet, whose preoccupations – the pitching of scientific rationale against the central mystery of human existence – pitch and bob around his verse. "He is," wrote Ted Hughes, "one of the half dozen most important poets writing anywhere."



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Confident Taiwan rolls out its tanks

TERESA POOLE
Hsinchu

Sixty miles south of Taipei, the 51st Tank Brigade was ready and waiting. But Lieutenant-General Kao An-guo, the deputy commander of Taiwan's Northern Field Army, was not letting on if he was concerned.

"I do not think the Chinese Communists have the ability to cross the Taiwan Strait," he said yesterday, as 40 tanks and armoured troop carriers put on a demonstration of what would await them if they did.

The training and attack base, in the suburbs of Hsinchu city, is home to 1,700 troops, one of many bases on Taiwan. If the general was to be believed, the brigade had stayed on level 5, the lowest in terms of alert. "We do not feel tense," he said.

Yesterday, as blustery rain and fog shrouded Taiwan and the strait, the battle was mostly about propaganda. As the tank brigade was put through its paces for the world's television cameras, Taiwan's message was confident. "We are ready to repulse any invading force coming from outside the island," said General Kao.

On the mainland side of the Taiwan Strait, China's latest military exercises appeared to have been delayed by bad weather. But preparations for a show of force were under way.

On the island of Pingtan, off China's south-east coast, radio broadcasts ordered residents of nearby islands to evacuate to the mainland before 4pm. Civilians on coastal areas were also told to move, and fishermen to stay in port.

People's Liberation Army (PLA) tanks and troop-carrying vehicles were reported to be patrolling the streets of Pingtan. "There are tanks, troop carriers and other military vehicles all over. The army has taken

charge of local traffic," a local official reported.

The new exercises, which were due to start yesterday and continue until after Taiwan's presidential election on Saturday, are expected to include well-publicised amphibious landings on Pingtan. It will be an unmistakable message to Taiwanese voters. Last November, large-scale beach landings were included in mainland exercises and then shown at length on state television for Taiwan's benefit. This week's army, navy and air force manoeuvres are expected to be larger than ever, over an area stretching to the middle of the Taiwan Strait.

In Hong Kong, the Peking-controlled *Wen Wei Po* newspaper quoted a PLA leader as saying China might need to widen the latest exercises.

"The scale of strategic exercises currently and in the future may have to be enlarged," said the deputy commander of Shenyang military district, Shi Baoyuan.

Although few analysts believe the PLA will attempt to seize any of Taiwan's territory this week, residents of small islands closest to the test zone have decided not to wait around. Large numbers of soldiers are on alert, and the towns have almost shut down.

On Wuchiu, 11 miles south of the zone, only 16 of the 82 residents remain, and they are under curfew. The 200 islanders still on the Chu islands, 11 miles north of the zone, practised air-raid drills yesterday. About 300 islanders decided to flee on Sunday, although the government has no official policy concerning evacuation.

Fishing boats, which would normally work these waters, were warned repeatedly to stay clear of the region and were turned back to Taiwan's northern port of Keelung.



Fighting talk: Taiwanese soldiers carrying a shell during exercises near the northern town of Hukou

Tension in the region will escalate this week after the arrival of the US aircraft-carrier *Nimitz*, and the decision on whether it should pass through the Taiwan Strait. At the weekend, China's Prime Minister, Li Peng, warned it not to. He

said any show of force in the strait would "merely complicate matters". In Hsinchu, General Kao was reticent about the US aircraft-carrier. "I wish the American soldiers... Oh, no... I can't tell you in detail," he smiled. Yesterday's tank

demonstration had been organised at short notice, following the mainland's slick television portrayal of missile tests near Taiwan earlier this month. Unlike China, where news of the PLA's exercises has been orchestrated by official

propaganda organs, Taiwan's publicity exercise was low-key, although Taiwanese journalists were banned. Had General Kao heard anything about mainland manoeuvres that day? "I have no time to read the newspapers today," he

laughed. As tanks emerged from the fog on to the battle training-ground, the commentary said: "With psychological warfare, the enemy will be easier to be destroyed." But the most effective weapon yesterday appeared to be the weather.

Photograph: Booty Yip/Reuters

IN BRIEF

Car bomb kills six in Algerian city

Algiers — A car bomb exploded yesterday outside the police headquarters in the north-eastern city of Tizi-Ouzou, killing at least six people and injuring 25 others, hospital sources reported. Twenty of the injured were said to be in a serious condition.

First reports indicated the bomb went off in a car parked near the main police station, not far from the railway terminal. Local officials blamed the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Algeria's most violent militant organisation. AP

Russian offensive

Moscow — Russian troops stormed into a village in western Chechnya to mop up pockets of resistance by separatist rebels, Russian news agencies said. The assault on the village of Samashki, about 20 miles west of the Chechen capital, Grozny, followed heavy Russian losses. A Russian official said that 11 servicemen were killed in an ambush. Reuters

Tramp burned alive

Paris — Youths killed a homeless man by setting him on fire in a street near the Eurostar terminal at the Gare du Nord, police said. The victim, aged about 30, was apparently doused with methylated spirits. Witnesses reported seeing three or four youths running away from the scene. Reuters

Camp crackdown

Tunis — Five Central African leaders launched a new crackdown on intimidation in camps for Rwandan refugees, in an effort to persuade them it is safe to return home. Former US president Jimmy Carter announced the measures, closing three days of talks. "The uncertain thing is convincing the refugees that it's safe and advantageous to return," he said. AP

Tamil Tiger attack

Colombo — Sri Lankan Tamil Tiger guerrillas killed 18 soldiers in a landmine attack in the northern Jaffna peninsula, in the first big rebel attack in several weeks. Reuters

Democracy blues

Harare — Fewer than half of Zimbabwe's 4.9 million voters cast ballots in the presidential election at the weekend, seen as a mere formality after a boycott by challengers to President Robert Mugabe. Interim figures showed about 31.4 per cent of registered voters turned out. Reuters

Nobel poet dies

Athens — Odysseus Elytis, 85, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1979, died at his home in central Athens yesterday. Radio stations broke into programmes to announce his death and many started non-stop broadcasts of his poems, which became hugely popular when set to music. Reuters

Flying high

Zhukovsky, Russia — The Tupolev company has unveiled a prototype update of its Tu-144 "Concorder" airliner, which it hopes US money will turn into the supersonic passenger aircraft of the 21st century. The Tu-144L retains the drop-nosed, delta-wing look of the 28-year-old Soviet rival to Concorde but is fitted with more powerful engines, developed for nuclear bombers. Reuters

Trees stripped bear

Sydney — Animal rights activists are fighting a plan by South Australia's National Parks and Wildlife Service to kill or remove 2,000 koalas on an island near Adelaide to halt a potentially disastrous population explosion. A state government spokesman said the present population of 5,000 animals was quickly stripping the island's eucalyptus trees of leaves — the creatures' main diet. AP

Riots rack Indonesian province

LEWA PARDOMUAN
Reuters

Jakarta — Several hundred youths rioted in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya yesterday, setting fire to cars and a market and damaging buildings in a second week of violence.

Riots hit the town of Abepura when the body of Thomas Wapal Wainggai, who died last week while serving a prison sentence in Jakarta, arrived in the provincial capital, Jayapura, for burial. "They burned cars and a market and damaged buildings," a spokesman said.

Residents said Jayapura, 2,000 miles east of Jakarta, was sealed off by the military. Offices were shut and frightened residents stayed indoors.

The riots broke out in Abepura after protesters were stopped from heading to Jayapura, 12 miles away. Residents and the army said last night that calm had returned but soldiers continued to patrol.

"Tension has reduced but the military is still keeping a watchful eye. There have been

no reports of arrests or casualties," an army officer said by telephone from Jayapura.

An official at the Jayapura general hospital said that there were some injuries but there no reports of deaths.

Residents said the riots, by 300-400 people, were linked to Wainggai, who was sentenced to 20 years in jail for proclaiming an independent Melanesian state in Irian during a flag-raising ceremony in 1987.

Seventy people, along with Wainggai, were tried for subversion and in 1988 were jailed for between six and 20 years. Wainggai, a US-trained anthropologist said to have died of heart problems on the way to

a hospital from Cipinang prison, just outside Jakarta, was believed to be in his sixties. His Japanese wife was sentenced to six years in jail and has since been released, but 21 others are still in detention.

Residents said the rioters, mostly students, wanted to take Wainggai's body to the university before it was taken to his family home. "He was a teacher at the university and they wanted to take him there before he was buried," one resident said.

Last week the Irian towns of Timika and Tembagapura, where Freeport Indonesia operates one of the world's largest copper and gold mines, were rocked by riots by disgruntled tribespeople frustrated at not benefiting from the development in Irian.

Diplomats said Wainggai was believed to have had close links with the separatist Free Papua Movement (OPM), which is fighting for an independent Irian Jaya. OPM rebels have been holding 11 hostages, including six Europeans, in the forbidding jungles of Irian since 8 January.

Abortion clinic killer faces life in prison

JOHN CARLIN
Washington

John Salvi, 24, was found guilty yesterday of murder after a Massachusetts jury turned down a defence claim that he was insane when he went on a shooting rampage at two Boston abortion clinics on 30 December 1994, killing two receptionists and wounding five others.

Salvi, who says he believes abortion is part of a worldwide conspiracy against the Roman Catholic Church, faces life in jail after convictions on two counts of first-degree murder and five counts of assault with intent to murder. There is no death penalty in Massachusetts.

Salvi's defence did not question the police version of the facts of the case, but contended that at the time of the killings he was prey to paranoid schizophrenia. Some of the evidence appeared to support the insanity plea. Witnesses testified that Salvi fired 10 bullets into

one of his victims, he cried: "This is what you get! You should pray the rosary!"

Before the trial started Salvi repeatedly disrupted hearings, insisting he be granted an opportunity to make a statement to the media about an anti-Catholic conspiracy in which, he said, the Freemasons and the Ku-Klux-Klan were involved.

The prosecution successfully argued, however, that Salvi had carried out the killings with clear premeditation and was fully alert to the fact that what he was doing was illegal and wrong. Witnesses said that he was seen practising at a shooting-range the day before his rampage.

Salvi's father said his son had been a normal healthy child, but late in his teens became strange and withdrawn, spending long hours closeted in his bedroom reading the Bible. Salvi's lawyers said his crime had been triggered by the murders of four Catholic priests in Algeria on 27 December 1994.

Seoul bars British journalist who parodied president

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Seoul

In an apparent toughening of its attitude towards the foreign media, South Korea has rejected a request by Jeremy Hanley, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, to reinstate a British journalist expelled after writing articles poking fun at President Kim Young Sam.

Earlier this month Mr Hanley asked Gong Ro Myung, the Foreign Minister, to reconsider the case of Bruce Cheesman, who works for the *Australian Financial Review*. On 26 February,

after nine years working in Seoul, his application for a new visa was rejected by the Justice Ministry.

Despite lobbying by diplomats, a government spokesman said the decision was "irrevocable" and Mr Cheesman would not be allowed to work again in South Korea.

No official reason has been given, but Suha Woo Hyun, director-general of the foreign-media division of the Korean Overseas Information Service, said Mr Cheesman had violated immigration regulations by doing research while visiting the

country as a tourist, and had "repeatedly gone beyond the bounds of what we consider sound journalistic practice. He repeatedly made false and defamatory allegations about the government of Korea."

Mr Cheesman insisted his visits as a tourist were made years ago and that what really rattled Seoul was his personal criticism of President Kim and members of his family.

Chief among the government's complaints is the case of the presidential Buddha. Last year Koreans were shaken by a series of disasters, including

the collapse of a bridge and a store in Seoul in which more than 500 people were killed.

A Buddhist paper reported rumours that Mr Kim, a Christian, had ordered the removal of a Buddha statue from the garden of the presidential palace. This — the rumours went — had angered the heavens.

The President's men denied the Buddha had been moved. The *Financial Review's* joke account, complete with cartoon, and citing inside sources, provoked fury. Mr Cheesman was hauled in for the latest in a series of official scoldings. Last

week the *Review* received papers from lawyers for the Korean government initiating defamation proceedings.

But more decisive, Mr Cheesman believes, was the book he has been working on: an unofficial biography of Mr Kim focusing on the most controversial rumours which flow around the charismatic President. He admitted he has no documentary evidence for the most serious allegations.

But, based on interviews with former and serving politicians and aides and officials, the book will make embarrassing al-

legations about the funding of Mr Kim's 1992 election campaign and about the unwedded Christian President's private life.

The past few months have been a critical period for President Kim: as well as the trials of his predecessors Rob Tae Woo and Chun Doo Hwan, on charges of corruption, mutiny and treason, his New Korea Party faces parliamentary elections in a month's time which could rob him of control of the National Assembly.

Mr Sohn said: "This present action is not aimed at the for-

ign press, with whom we enjoy excellent working relations. The action we have taken is a legitimate recourse of a kind acceptable in any civilised country." Until this year, no correspondent had been expelled for professional reasons since the days of military dictatorship in the 1980s.

"The screws have been tightening in the last couple of months," said Mr Cheesman. "It is anti everything that the new Korea is supposed to stand for, a Third World mentality of worrying what the foreign press says about it."

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Bomber

Jordanian challenging royal inst jail term



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Odysseus Elytis

West of Sorrow is the title of the final collection of poems by Odysseus Elytis, published in Greek at the end of last year. The seven poems of the collection were apparently written as recently as last summer, the poet's 84th, spent at Poros Rafi on the coast outside Athens.

Elytis will probably always be remembered as a poet of the Greek summer and of the Aegean sea. His first poems date from 1929, and his almost annual visits as a young man to the Greek islands. In the 1930s Elytis quickly established himself as one of the leading voices of a generation that included his fellow Nobel laureate George Seferis, and the prolific and politically committed Yannis Ritsos.

His poems of that decade celebrated, under the gathering shadows of war to come, the vitality and vibrancy of an Aegean landscape and the unharmed energies of man at its heart. The poems of *Ornithos*, his first and longest collection, published in 1940, combine a paganistic worship of nature with the free association and ebullient licence of the Surrealist movement, which he had himself helped to transplant to Greece (although characteristically he avoided defining himself or his work as Surrealist).

This exultation carried the 30-year-old Elytis even into the Second World War, and the horrors of the Axis occupation of Athens, where under conditions of censorship he continued his praise of natural forces, undeterred, in his second volume, *Sun the First* (1943). But by the time Nazi troops had arrived to take over his country,

Elytis had already had his baptism of fire. Serving in the front line on the Albanian front, in the winter of 1940-41, when the Greeks, in appalling conditions, succeeded in beating back Mussolini's invading troops. Elytis had already come close to death, and he gave form to the experience in the sombre but ultimately triumphant *Heroic and Elegiac Song of the Lost Second Lieutenant of Albania*.

In this long poem, published in 1945, and in his successor, *The Axion Esti*, published 14 years later and still reckoned to be his masterpiece, Elytis comes fully to grips with the confrontation of good and evil in the world. Life and the creative urges that bind man to Nature are celebrated in these later poems, but now they have to fight against the dark, against the inhuman, incomprehensible power of "iron and fire". But, even here, the poetic instinct survives, bloodied but triumphant, through the unshakable bond that ties man to his landscape and binds both with a stern morality which is the order of the cosmos.

After a decade of relative silence in the 1950s (prolonged by the arrival of military dictatorship in his country, and Elytis's principled refusal, along with many other established writers, to publish under those conditions), Elytis in the 1970s went on to perfect what has been termed an "interior lyricism", an almost pure lyrical statement in which words no longer refer to the world but instead create it. This is most finely exemplified in the collections *The Light-Tree* and *The Monogram* (both first published outside Greece, in 1971). At the

same time, during the Seventies, Elytis returned to the form of the long, complex poem that he had perfected with *The Axion Esti*. Neither *Maria Nefeli* (1978) nor *The Little Sailor* (1984, but written earlier) achieves quite the mastery of large-scale architecture combined with the stinging force of minute detail that characterise the earlier work, but both have earned their admirers.

At an age when retirement is the norm in most professions, Elytis continued to write and publish prolifically through the 1980s. Among his last work *The Oxyptera Elegies* (1991) stands out: a sustained meditation on death which proclaims, with mellow warmth, the superior power of poetry, and extends the range of Elytis's writing well beyond its Aegean homeland, to embrace and breathe new life into the legacy of the German Romantics, especially Hölderlin and Novalis.

As well as being a poet, Elytis is the author of two large books of essays. Curiously, the bird that takes wing with such lyrical power in verse, turns out to be ungainly in the more sober medium of prose. Arresting in their insights and often moving in their declarations, Elytis's essays on the whole complement rather than illuminate his poems, and are often harder to read. He was prolific as a translator of verse (mainly French, but he is also credited with introducing Lorca into Greece), and from his Surrealist friends he learnt and never lost the art of photocollage, whose method has a certain affinity with the bold juxtapositions of his poems.

Elytis became almost a national institution in his native

country, to the extent that radio and television programmes were interrupted yesterday with the announcement of his death. This may reflect the greater seriousness with which poetry is still taken in Greece than it is here.

But this popularity has another cause, too. Since the late 1950s, poems of his have been set to music by popular composers such as Mikis Theodorakis, and some were even specially written as songs. In this way, a poet whose work at first sight seems highly individual, dense, and complex, has for many years appealed straight to the heart of people who may not often have sat down with a book in their hands. The passing of Elytis is a testament to that disappearing "oral culture" that was still strong in the Greece of his generation.

Elytis's international reputation goes back well beyond 1979, when he won the Nobel Prize for Literature. This has been most marked in France, where a major exhibition in his honour was held at the Pompidou Centre during the 1980s. Elytis's unembarrassed exuberance seems to transfer well into French, while Anglo-Saxon readers (and translators) tend to prefer a greater reticence. However, *The Axion Esti* has been translated into English in full, by Edmund Keeley and the late George Savidis (1974, reissued by Anvil Press, 1980). Selections from Elytis's poetry up to the early 1970s can be found in *The Sovereign Sun*, translated by Kimon Friar (Bloodaxe Books, Newcastle, originally published in the US, 1974) and the *Selected Poems*, by various hands, published by Anvil in 1981. *The Oxyptera*

Elegies, translated by David Connolly, is due to appear very soon.

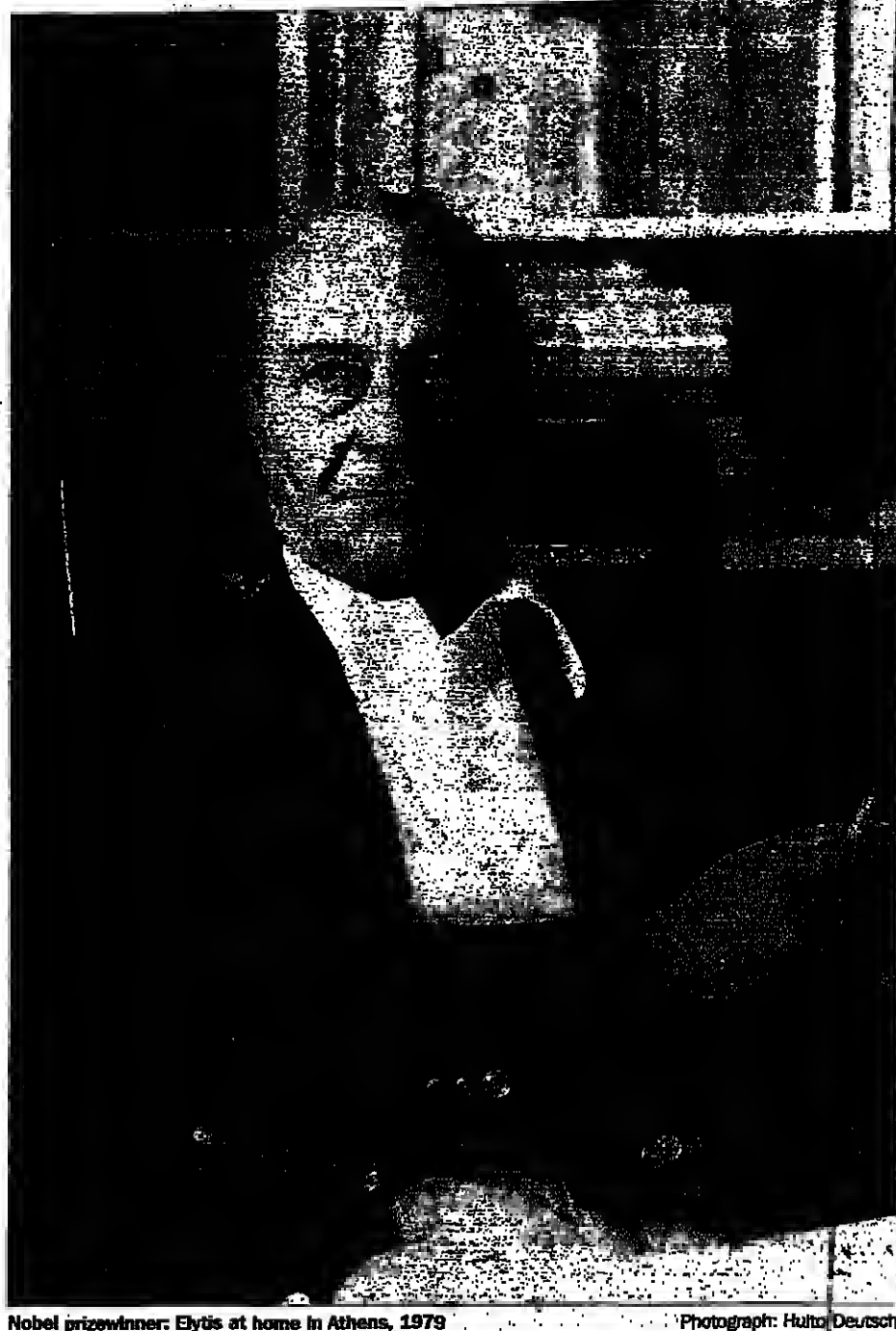
Ever since he decided, in 1936, to abandon his studies at the Athens Law School (the training-ground of so many 20th-century men of letters), Elytis's life was dedicated to poetry. He was reticent in public about such matters as political affiliation; he held administrative posts in organisations such as Greek National Radio, and the National Theatre, but not for long. An account of his life, apart from his work, might well take the form of a list of his travels, both in Greece and in Europe, especially France. His family background (his father owned a prosperous soap factory; one reason, it is supposed, for the decision of the young Odysseus Alepoudelis to write under a pseudonym) gave him the opportunity for this, and so he was not obliged, like Seferis, to follow a career in parallel with his life as a poet.

But Odysseus Elytis was no poet of the ivory tower. Poetry, for him, was not an evasion of the deeper responsibilities of life; for the poet, he believed, poetry is the deepest responsibility of life. His definition of death, from an essay of 1976, both shows this, and acquires particular poignancy at the end of a writing career of almost three score years and ten:

Death is when words no longer have the power to generate, right from the start, the things that they name.

Roderick Beaton

Odysseus Alepoudelis (Odysseus Elytis), poet: born Heraklion, Crete 2 November 1911; Nobel Prize for Literature 1979; died Athens 18 March 1996.



Nobel prizewinner: Elytis at home in Athens, 1979

Photograph: Hulton-Deutsch

Brian Hulls

Brian Hulls was one of the finest news and documentary cameramen of his generation.

It was always immensely reassuring to know that he had been assigned to a story, to meet him at the airport, or in some remote hotel close to a front line.

You knew that if there was a picture to be had, he would get it. But just as important was his judgement, his intelligence and his nerve. We once had the dubious pleasure of running together across the old bridge at Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina while the Croat gunmen who had it in their sights were doing their best to destroy it and everything that made the mistake of moving on it. Hulls's less than intrepid reporter dashed over at top speed. He trotted behind, calmly panning his camera across the gorge of the river Neretva and the ruins of the city.

The world has been through a lot of pain since the end of the Cold War. Brian Hulls was usually there to record what was happening. I worked with him in Saudi Arabia, in Baghdad during the Gulf War, in Iraqi Kurdistan after it ended, in Somalia, in Sarajevo and in Mostar. He was a delightful travelling companion. He produced some of the most memorable images that have been seen on television.

Hulls was born in 1947 in London, and until the age of nine lived in Malaya, where his father worked for GEC. He was educated at Charterhouse Secondary Modern School and then at the Polytechnic, Regent Street, where he met a young journalism student called Alison Campbell. He had no money, because he had spent his entire first term's grant on a cine-camera. She wasn't put off when, after many applications, he joined the BBC as a trainee film editor.

He went freelance in 1976. That was the only way to become a cameraman. A Middle

Eastern television company commissioned him to film and direct and he travelled all over the world. For a while he lived in Tehran as a field producer for the American network ABC. Then, after the fall of the Shah, he returned to the region to cover the Iran-Iraq war.

Later in the Eighties, with a young family, Hulls had a quieter life, basing himself in Somerset for the ITV company TSW. But the international news bug is hard to resist. He returned to the BBC in 1990, just before Saddam Hussein's troops invaded Kuwait.

Brian Hulls was a quiet man. If his colleagues were failing to live up to the high professional standards he set, he could be less than monosyllabic. I saw him lose his cool only once, when a hapless newspaper reporter came between him and his craft. Just after the Iraqi invasion in 1990, we travelled to a dusty town on the Saudi Arabia-Kuwait border to meet a Walter Mitty-ish member of the Kuwaiti resistance. The reporter kept objecting to Hulls's moving around the room to get a full range of shots. After the masked Kuwaiti had left, Hulls turned on the scribbler. "When you write, do you use commas and full stops? Do you follow the rules of grammar? The only I was getting were just as important."

And in case that was not clear enough, he offered to take the poor man outside to give him a short, sharp introduction to the mysteries of television news. Impatient reporters and producers who worked with Hulls were soon told that good pictures take time, even when the shells are getting a little too close and the building, or what's left of it, is starting to shake. He hated being rushed. He had real guts, but he never took stupid risks. He wore his helmet and flask jacket when less experienced cameramen were swaggering around in shirtsleeves. He knew that war is dangerous (it is sur-



Hulls: producing much more than the first draft of history to which reporters aspire

prising how many do not) but he knew too that the only way to be really safe is to stay at home.

On the first night of the Gulf War Iraqi security guards prowled the corridors of the Hotel Rasheed in Baghdad rounding up the foreign press and ushering them, none too politely, to the shelters. Hulls hid in some dark place until they had gone, then went back to work, filming the Allied air-raids until dawn. The pictures he shot that night went round the world. They were used recently in a major documentary series. No doubt they will be seen again and again in the years ahead. Cameramen like Brian Hulls produce much more than the first draft of history to which reporters are said to aspire. Future generations who want to know how history looked and sounded will turn to

his work long after all the first drafts have been thrown away.

Hulls was a photo-journalist who never forgot that a successful day for those who work in war-zones was often the worst day, or the last day, for the people he saw. He would return to their families later without his camera, with presents and kind words. He never forgot that the people he was dealing with were human beings, which for some colleagues is the easiest way of dealing with the suffering witnessed. One day during the siege of east Mostar he was filming while the town was being shelled. An elderly woman staggered out of the dust and smoke. Her home had been hit. With great sensitivity and professionalism Hulls kept on filming while her dying husband was loaded on to a fire-engine and driven to the district-hospital that served as a hospital. He was

there as the doctors pronounced the man dead and as his widow started to grieve.

Afterwards he befriended the woman and explained why he had been there. On later trips to Mostar he brought a few things that she needed. She was touched beyond measure by his concern. She told me that her husband's death had not been in vain, because Hulls and his camera had been there to record what was happening to them and to the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

After his cancer was diagnosed Brian Hulls fought until the end. Nobody who knew him expected anything else.

Jeremy Bowen

Brian Hulls, cameraman: born London 15 August 1947; married 1969 Alison Campbell (two daughters); died Claydon, Devon 13 March 1996.

Ray Cline

Ray Cline was one of the Central Intelligence Agency's top analysts of the Soviet Union. Throughout his career he fought for the agency to concentrate more on "pure" intelligence and less on the covert operations run by its "Praetorian Guard", the Directorate for Plans.

In 1956 Cline decided, correctly, that the text of Nikita Khrushchev's famous "secret speech" to the Soviet Communist Party's Twentieth Congress, which the agency had received from an Israeli source, was authentic and persuaded Allen Dulles, the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), to publish it in the face of opposition from several of the agency's senior barons.

These men, among them James Jesus Angleton, head of Counter-Espionage, and Frank Wisner Sur, the Director for Plans, wanted to keep the secret speech secret, and leak out Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin's crimes a little at a time to encourage the anti-Soviet resistance in eastern Europe. Cline persuaded Allen Dulles that it would be wiser to make the speech public.

Cline's reward was to be chosen, along with James Billington, then a CIA official, now a distinguished historian and Librarian of Congress, to accompany him on an indiscreetly publicised world tour. One high point came when a Hong Kong tailor, summoned to make suits for a supposedly anonymous American, bowed deeply and said, "Thank you, Mr Dulles, for your custom!"

In 1965, when Dulles's successor, the industrialist John McCone, retired as the head of the CIA, Cline was Deputy Director for Intelligence (DDI), one of several serious candidates to take over as DCI.

Perhaps partly for this reason, partly because he felt that the head of the Agency ought to be an intelligence professional, but mostly because he thought

he was an unintelligent and incompetent amateur, Cline tangled repeatedly with the man who got the top job, Admiral "Red" Raborn.

Cline, his colleague Richard Helms recorded, "thought Raborn was a horse's ass and he didn't hesitate to say so". On one occasion the admiral suddenly discovered that the Chinese were not getting on well with the Russians. Cline, who had known this for years and whose department had produced more detailed analysis on this than any other single subject, could not contain his irritation. When Raborn asked Cline to send over any studies he had on Sino-Soviet relations, Cline asked acidly, "Is a wheelbarrow?"

After several bruising confrontations with Raborn, Cline asked for a foreign posting and became the CIA's bureau chief in Frankfurt. But he had the last word. He went to Clark Clifford, the powerful Washington lawyer and former Truman Administration official who was the head of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and to McGeorge Bundy, his National Security Adviser, and insisted that Raborn must go. President Johnson agreed and replaced Raborn after only one year in office.

Although essentially an analyst, with great expertise on the Soviet Union, and committed to the importance of intelligence as opposed to covert action, Cline could take a robust line about the usefulness of action when he saw the need. In 1964 when the "Simba" rebels in Zaïre were holding 1,000 prisoners, including Americans and Belgian nuns, Cline argued forcefully that the CIA should go in "like gangbusters".

In rapid succession he suggested "sending in a team through the jungle, bombing the city, a helicopter raid and a parachute drop". It was his opposite number Richard Helms, the Director for Plans and as such the

covert action chief, who successfully counselled abstinence.

Cline played an important role in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. As well as being the President on his directorate's assessment of the risk from Soviet missiles, which had been secretly installed in the island, Cline studied reports from American secret agents inside Cuba and personally briefed Cuban refugees. Later, in his book *Secrets, Spies and Scholars* (1977), he defended covert operations, arguing that it was no different from secret assistance to countries friendly to the United States. In particular, he argued that the CIA's attempts to co-operate with the Mafia to assassinate Fidel Castro were justifiable.

"It was not illegal," he wrote, for the CIA to invite the Mafia to kill Castro, since American organised crime syndicates "former Havana gambling empire gathered them some contacts to work with, and since a gangland killing would be unlikely to be attributed to the US government".

From 1969 to 1973 he headed the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Now bearded, he was a familiar figure in Washington men's clubs. After his retirement he worked on his book, one of the most thoughtful accounts of secret intelligence work.

Godfrey Hodgson

Ray Cline, CIA, political scientist, writer: born Anderson, Illinois 4 June 1918; Director, US Naval Auxiliary Communications Centre, Taipei 1958-62; Deputy Director of Intelligence, CIA 1962-66; Special Adviser to the American Embassy, Bonn 1966-69; Director, State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research 1969-73; Director, World Power Studies, Georgetown University 1973-86; married 1941 Marjorie Wilson (two daughters); died Arlington, Virginia 13 March 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

CLARENGOLD: On 7 March 1996, to Rachel (nee Chambers) and Andrew, a daughter, Eleanor Peia.

MEWERTER: On 1 March 1996, in Philadelphia, to Maureen and Graeme, a son, Paul James, a brother for Sarah, Ian and Andrew.

DEATHS

PARSONS: On 16 March, peacefully, Olive, aged 104, Funeral Tuesday 21 March, Golder Green Crematorium at 3pm. Flowers, or donations to Amnesty, Enquiries to Malcolm Jones & Metcalfe, (01442) 864548.

SPRINGETT: Jack Allan, CBE MA, on 15 March 1996 aged 80, much loved and loving husband, father and grandfather. Funeral service and celebration of his life on Tuesday 26 March, 11.15am at Chelmsford Cathedral. Family flowers only. Donations if desired for Action Aid, c/o T Penneck & Sons Funeral Directors, 1-3 Chelmsford Road, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7DW.

Birthdays

Miss Ursula Andrews, actress, 60; Sir Nigel Bromfield, ambassador to Germany, 59; Miss Glenn Close, actress, 49; Lady Georgina Colledge, journalist, 80; Mr Peter Coles, television director and producer, 84; Professor Ronald Girdwood, former President, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, 78; The Right Rev Ronald Gordon, former Bishop of Lambeth, 69; Mr Bryan Hildrew, former managing director, Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 76; Vice-Admiral Sir Norman King, chairman, Bucks Health Authority, 63; Sir Dermond Lindsay, former Chairman, Royal Academy of Music, 68; Mr Paul Marland MP, 56; Sir Peter Mascfield, aviation authority, 82; Mr Philip Mason, novelist, 80; Lord Plant of Highfield, Master, St Catherine's College, Oxford, 51; Li-Guen Sir Alan Reay, Chief Honorary Steward, Westminster Abbey, 71; Sir Kenneth Robinson, former chairman, the Arts Council, 85; Mr Philip Roth, novelist, 63; Sir Leonard Scopes, former diplomat, 84; Mr Bruce Willis, actor, 41; Miss Mary Wimbush, actress, 72.

Anniversaries

Births: Georges de la Tour, painter, 1903; Tobias George Smollett, physician and author, 1721; Charles Wal-

ton Wentworth, second Marquis of Rockingham, statesman, 1730; Joseph Bates, composer, 1741; Dr David Livingstone, explorer and missionary, 1813; Sir Richard Francis Burton, scholar and explorer, 1821; William Allingham, poet, 1824; Albert Plakham Ryder, painter, 1947; William Jennings Bryan, politician and speaker, 1860; Sergei Pavlovich Diaghilev, founder of the Diaghilev ballet company, 1872; Max Reger, teacher and composer, 1873; Sir John Hubert Marshall, archaeologist, 1876; Joseph Albert, abstract painter and poet, 1888; Deaths: Thomas Killgrew, playwright, 1663; Rene Rodiere, explorer, 1876; Thomas Daniel, landscape painter, 1840; Mary Annand, finder of the first Ichthyosaurus fossil, 1847; William Henry Priestley, architect, 1857; Friedrich Wilhelm Schadow, Gothenburg, painter, 1862; George Richmond, painter, 1896; Antoine Thomson d'Abbadie, explorer and scientist, 1897; Arthur James Balfour, first Earl Balfour, statesman, 1890; Edgar Rice Burroughs, novelist and creator of "Tarzan", 1890; George George-Duj, Romanian prince, 1908; Stephen Graham, travel writer, 1973; Faith Cuthrell Baldwin, romantic novelist, 1978; Alan Badel, actor, 1982. On this day:

The Rev John White formed the New England Company in Massachusetts Bay, 1628; the US Senate refused to ratify the Versailles Treaty, 1920; the opera *Faust* by Gounod was performed for the first time, Paris, 1859; Sydney Harbour bridge was officially opened, 1932; following an internal dispute, British parachute troops took over the Caribbean island of Anguilla, 1969; Willy Brandt and Willy Stoph, heads of West and East Germany, met for the first time at Erfurt, 1970. Today is the Feast Day of St John of Patmos, St Joseph (husband of the Virgin) and St Landolf.

Lectures

National Gallery: Alexander Svirgitsky, "Constantin (the) 'The Hay-Woman'", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Anna Contadini, "Islamic Tiles", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Rachel Barnes, "John Everett Millais: the Pre-Raphaelite years and after", 1pm. National Portrait Gallery: Frances Homan, "William Hogarth's Portrait of William Jones", 1.10pm. Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, London: Robert Pomphrey, "The Pursuit of Music", 7.30pm. Royal Society, London SW1: Pro-

fessor Steve Jones, "Has the Genetic Utopia Arrived?" 6pm. RIBA Architecture Centre, London W1: Jo Noero, "Gauteng Architecture", 6.30pm. University College London, London WC1: Professor Theo Hermans, "Translation's Other", 5.30pm.

Luncheons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Sir Nicholas Bonsor Bt MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, hosted a lunch held yesterday at Lancaster House, London SW1, in honour of Mr Mikhail Popov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova.

Corporation of London: The Lord Mayor of London, Mr John Chabry, and the Lady Mayoress, Mrs Chabry, together with the Sheriff and his lady, received the guests at a luncheon held yesterday at the Mansion House, London EC1, on the occasion of the visit by Mr Ingemar Ingevik, Lord Mayor of Stockholm, and Mrs Ingevik. Among those present were:

Mr Axel Weimerholer, First Vice-President of the Stockholm City Council, and Mrs Weimerholer; Mrs Eva Torngren, Second Vice-President of the City Council, and Mr Staffan Torngren; Mr Lars-Mike Nilsson, Ambassador of Sweden, and Mrs Nilsson; Viscount Craigavon; Lord and Lady Mountbatten; Lord

and Lady Porter of Ludlowham; Mr Alan Both MP; Sir John and Lady Ure; Sir William and Lady Young; Sir Jerry Wiggin MP and Lady Wiggin.

Royal Over-Seas League

Professor David O'Keefe, Director, Centre for the Law of the European Union, University College London, was the guest speaker at a meeting of the Royal Over-Seas League's Discussion Circle held yesterday evening at Over-Seas House, St James's, London SW1. His subject was "Current Issues of European Integration". Mrs Elizabeth Cresswell presided.

Recorders

The following have been appointed Recorders: South Eastern Circuit: David M. Best; Inigo O. Bang; Joseph John Boothby; Marie Therese Cartwright; Suzanne Coates; Kieran A. Keenan QC; Patricia M.T. Dunne; Paul Doolson; Alan E. Greenwood; Susan Hamilton QC; Walter Greville Howkins; Nigel R.W. Lambert; David A. Landau; Timothy J. Langdale QC; Humfrey I. Molloy; Richard G.B. McComb QC; Rodney G. McEminson; Neil A. McKinnick; Jeffrey V. Pople; George P. Polman QC; Richard J. Ransell; Christopher R.A. Solon QC; Pamela Sciven QC; Andrew C. Smith QC; Christopher J. Smyth; Alan C. Seymour; Michael A. Supperstone QC; Christopher J. Sutton-Matlock; Nigel C. Van der Bijl; William B.N. White; Judge E. Wilmer; Hazel E. Williamson QC; Alan; Wilton QC; Michael P. Vellon. Western Circuit: Paul R. Burdick; Andrew J.

Burnett; Patrick R.J. Clarkson QC; Paul L.D. Cassidie QC; Mark Essex QC; Mark A. Evans QC; Anthony Dennis Hope; James Rogers; Andrew H.R. Maitland; Christopher R. Mather; Clare M. Miskie.

Wills

Harold Arthur, first Viscount Watkinson, of Bosham, West Sussex, Minister of Transport 1955-59, and Minister of Defence 1959-62, chairman of Cadbury Schweppes Ltd 1969-74, left estate valued at £265,596 net.

Geoffrey Noel, 12th Earl Waldegrave, of Cheltenham Mendip, Somerset, former Lord Warden of the Stannaries, left estate valued at £2,084,263. He left £1,000 to St Mary Magdalene Church, Cheltenham Mendip.

Professor George Stanley Rushbrooke, of Gosforth, Tyne and Wear, Professor of Theoretical Physics, Newcastle University 1951-80, left estate valued at £703,377 net. After personal bequests of £5,000 and 2% of the residue, he left 1/3 of the residue equally between the University Development Trust of Newcastle University, Northumberland Wildlife Trust, St James United Reformed Church, Newcastle upon Tyne, and Christian Aid.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen holds in investiture at Buckingham Palace, The Princess of Wales visits the Prince's Trust Residential Centre at Pontia's Sand Bay Hotel, Newcastle, Avon; and a President, the Prince's Youth Business Award, attended a Concert at the Royal Albert Hall, London SW7. The Princess of Wales, Patron, English National Ballet, attends a performance of *Alceste* in Wolfenbutel at the London Coliseum, London WC2. The Princess Royal, President, British Knitting and Crocheting Export Council, visits Rwanda, Longborough, Leicestershire as Patron, National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, optimistically presides, Rutland Citizens Advice Bureau, Oakham, Rutland, Leicestershire; as President, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, visits Leicestershire Citizens Centre, Leicester; and visits the first newly completed development at Long Wharton, Leicestershire. The Duchess of Gloucester visits Royal Air Force Lossdown, Morpeth, Scotland. Prince Michael of Kent, President of the Institute of the Motor Industry, opens the first completed scheme at Oulton Court, Wymondham, Leicestershire, and visits the first newly completed development at Long Wharton, Leicestershire. The Duchess of Gloucester visits Royal Air Force Lossdown, Morpeth, Scotland. Prince Michael of Kent, President of the Institute of the Motor Industry, opens the first completed scheme at Oulton Court, Wymondham, Leicestershire, and visits the first newly completed development at Long Wharton, Leicestershire. The Duchess of Gloucester visits Royal Air Force Lossdown, Morpeth, Scotland. Prince Michael of Kent, President of the Institute of the Motor Industry, opens the first completed scheme at Oulton Court, Wymondham, Leicestershire, and visits the first newly completed development at Long Wharton, Leicestershire.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Why the mafia is into your beef

The EU ban on growth hormones for cows has created a lucrative black market, reports Katharine Butler

It might seem an unlikely product for the mafia to be interested in. Drugs, sex and gambling are its usual terrain. But in Europe, particularly in Belgium, the mafia is into beef.

It is not the cows themselves that black marketeers are interested in so much as the hormone drugs that enhance meat production. The use of hormone drugs in meat production has been outlawed in the European Union since 1989. But that blanket ban has helped to create a lucrative and well-organised black market.

The organised criminal rings that control this trade are prepared to go to disturbing lengths to circumvent the ban. Murder, for a start, is not

beyond them. A year ago hormone dealers put out a contract on Karel Van Noppen, a 43-year-old Belgian government vet and chief meat inspector who led a relentless crusade to stamp out hormone abuse.

His widow Mieke recalls the death threats, the phone calls in the night, the warnings to ease off. "I did not try to stop him. It was his whole life, I knew he would not stop" she says.

Van Noppen's associates believe he was close to unmasking the masterminds of a network spanning Belgium and Holland and probably extending into France when he was silenced. He was shot at close range just yards from his front door.

Van Noppen was not alone. Another Belgian vet had his front door peppered with bullets. An MEP who has campaigned against the hormone trade has had a petrol bomb and a hand grenade hurled at him. Other vets have been beaten up.

Hormone dealing is thought to be the second most lucrative organised crime racket in Belgium after drugs.

Hormone compounds are relatively easy to manufacture. When injected into animal muscle to artificially stimulate growth, hormones can yield increases in profits for intensive producers by large margins, anything from 10 per cent to more than double the normal profit of about £100 per animal.

The Belgian authorities reacted to the murder by putting in place tougher controls, spot checks on farms and at abattoirs, and setting up a dedicated police unit to attack the mafia. A new law has brought in fines of up to £510,000.

But the killers have not been traced and the Belgian agriculture minister, Karel Pinxten, admitted recently that the mafia's "hard core" is as active as ever.

Consumer groups, spurred by a wave of public revulsion following the Van Noppen murder, have been monitoring meat in the shops and claim that as much as 25 per cent of beef on sale contains hormone residues. Butchers and super-

market chains are increasingly turning to organic producers or suppliers able to guarantee hormone-free meat.

Public concern has also been mounting in Ireland, which is believed to be a key target for drug dealers operating out of Belgium and Holland.

In 1992 the Irish police seized a large quantity of banned growth hormones when they raided the home of a senior official in the Irish Department of Agriculture. Just last month a Tipperary cattle dealer, Danny Finning, was shot, possibly by an IRA punishment squad, for trading in clenbuterol, the so-called "angel dust". Eleven cattle in Finning's meat plant were

found with traces of the drug in their bodies. Peter Dargan, a former president of the Irish Veterinary Union, triggered alarm recently with a damaging claim that a quarter of Irish beef cattle is illegally hormone-treated. The claim was emphatically denied by the Irish government, which says its controls show the figure is only around 3 per cent.

But privately officials admit that the battle against purveyors of cocktails like "angel dust" and "jungle juice" is a long way from being won, despite harsh penalties ranging from fines of £100,000 to 10-year jail terms.

"We believe the mafia is small but it is effective. And you will always find a minority of

producers ready to take the risk," said one Irish official.

Some critics of the EU ban, reconfirmed and tightened by agriculture ministers yesterday despite British objections, argue that Brussels, by choosing to go against the scientific evidence, is playing into the hands of the illegal drug dealers by driving the trade underground.

Hormones are permitted in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, so inevitably some European producers believe they can compete better with the help of anabolic steroids or similar substances.

Consumers could be at even greater risk, the argument goes, because users of illegal

hormones are using unsupervised cocktails. They are also injecting them directly into the flesh of the beast to avoid detection, whereas formerly they might have been concentrated in the ear or animal parts not destined for human consumption.

Some veterinary medicines that are legal for treating respiratory conditions in horses and pets are also being abused as cattle growth promoters. Scientists agree that residues of these substances could pose alarming risks for human health but are now wondering if the mafia would find a market for them if the "safe" steroid hormones like oestradiol and progesterone were decriminalised.

The making of a modern beef machine: how hormones make cows grow fatter

What are growth promoters?

In 1960, an Italian school boy allegedly started to grow breasts after eating beef that contained a synthetic hormone, oestriol, which had been given to cattle to promote weight gain and increase the proportion of lean muscle. At the time, the scandal led to a ban on the use of hormone growth promoters in cattle within the EC. Within a year, the stilbenes and stilbene derivatives were banned throughout the EC but there was no agreement on five other hormones. Three of them are already naturally present in cattle: oestradiol, progesterone, and testosterone, while two trenbolone and zeranol are synthetic analogues of the natural hormones.

The drugs fall into the same general class as the anabolic steroids whose human analogues have been abused by bodybuilders. The bovine equivalents increase the efficiency with which cattle convert feed to muscle. Because different countries were regulating the use of growth promoters differently, the Council of Agriculture Ministers decided in 1988 to ban all growth promoters completely. The EC also banned the import of meat produced by the prohibited method. In 1995, the Gatt Uruguay Round was finally implemented and the United States announced that it would regard the European Union ban as a barrier to trade.

The ear Farmers (not vets) use an injection gun with a needle inserted into the cartilage at the base of the ear, and press the trigger to expel a small pellet into the ear.

The pellet then acts as a slow release patch, rather like some long-acting human contraceptives, allowing a small amount of the hormone to enter the animal's bloodstream continually over subsequent months.

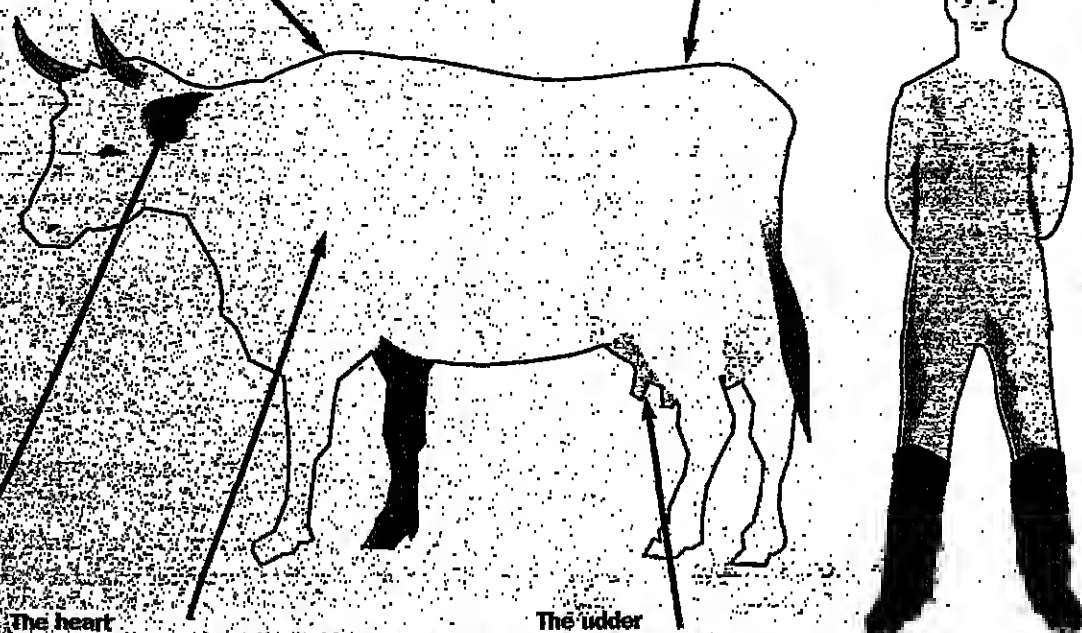
The back

Farmers estimate that they can get a 10 per cent increase in the efficiency with which the cows convert their feed into muscle (meat). As a result of the use of hormones and mass-production techniques, American beef is significantly cheaper than European. However, some animal breeders believe that similar gains can be made by selective breeding "and you don't have to pay pharmaceutical companies".

The cow

The hips

Animal welfare organisations maintain that selective breeding has already pushed farm animals close to their physiological limits. They warn that the animals' skeletons will not keep pace with the accelerated growth provoked by injections of hormones, which would trigger literally crippling deformities in the legs and hips. Such problems have been seen in poultry and pigs.



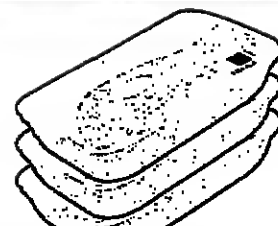
The heart

Accelerated growth also increases the demands on the animals' cardiovascular systems, according to Compassion in World Farming.

The udder

Injections of bovine growth hormone produced by genetic engineering have been proposed as a means of increasing milk production. Although this is not the subject of the current controversy, it is another area in which the EU and the US are out of step. Growth hormone is also naturally produced by the cows, and so any residues in the milk would be indistinguishable from the real thing. But there are reports of increased mastitis (infections of the udder) in cows where the injections have been used on an experimental basis.

Text by Tom Wilkie



The chunk of meat

Consumers and health officials were worried that residues of the hormones might be present in meat after slaughter, with consequent health effects, including the possible "masculinising" of women who ate meat containing testosterone residues. Even before the Italian health scare, there had been accounts of butchers fattening more sons than average as a result of their exposure to hormones. But in 1982 a Scientific Working Group under the chairmanship of professor Eric Lamming of Nottingham University, reported to the European Commission that the three natural hormones would not present any harmful effects to the health of consumers when used as growth promoters. The risks to consumers are difficult to establish but do not seem to be great.

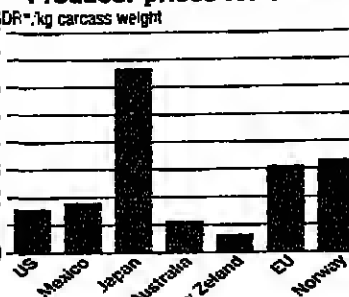
Never the less Dr Chris Brown, beef strategy manager for the UK's Meat and Livestock Commission, says: "We are not talking about doubling or quadrupling an animal's weight. But producers are conscious of the 'what is the consumer going to say about this?' factor. If we can't sell it to the consumers, then there is not going to be the drive for it. At the end of the day, political considerations are going to drive this one."

The farmers

The administration even of powerful drugs that are neatly packaged as slow release injectable pellets is unlikely to cause an occupational health and safety risk to farmers. However, there are reports of some European farmers adding growth promoters illegally to feed and being exposed to dangerous concentrations - leading to death in a couple of cases. This appears not to be a problem with the hormones but with the powerful drug clenbuterol - a "beta-blocker" that can cause severe heart problems. There is evidence of a lucrative black market in Ireland and continental Europe for this particular drug.

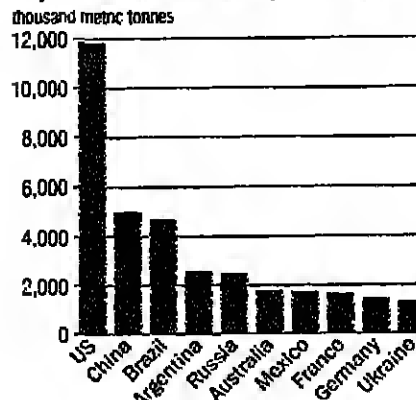
The world of beef

Producer prices for beef

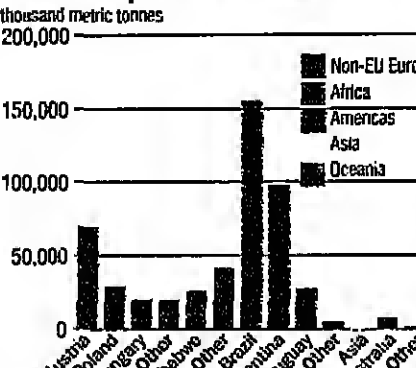


*SDF: Special Drawing Rights: the IMF's currency measure, based on a basket of the US, German, French, Japanese and UK currencies

Top 10 forecast beef producers 1996



Exporters of beef to EU



Research: Ben Summers & Anna Davies

Dr Ruth on sex and the sabbath

Dr Ruth Westheimer, the New York University professor best known for doling out sex therapy with lashings of chutzpah on her television show



(below), has turned her attention to the Jewish sabbath. It is, she tells the forthcoming edition of the Jewish Quarterly magazine, "by design a deeply erotic experience."

For those who may have missed this association over the past few thousand years, she explains: "Making love on Friday night is a specific celebration of the unity of God's masculine and feminine aspects.... Almost every custom of the Jewish sabbath observance facilitates our goal of lighting each other's fire and becoming entwined.... The lovers dine by candlelight. The meal begins with the sharing of wine.... When they are ready to go to bed, the lovers almost can't help but do so in a highly seductive and seducible state of mind."

Dinner by candlelight, hands touching over the sabbath bread; how unromantic of Dr Ruth's female interviewer to interject: "I don't quite see how Sabbath can be erotic. On Friday night, I see a very tired Jewish woman."

Perhaps that tired woman has been taking Dr Ruth's philosophy to heart.

Lightweight approach to crime policy

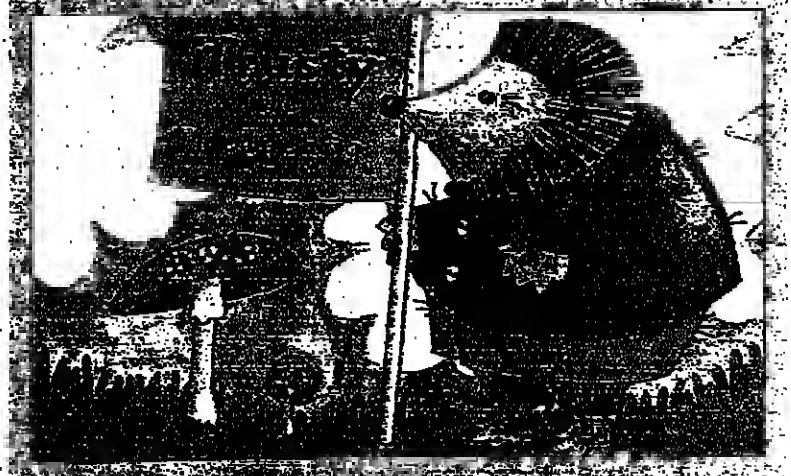
As the editor of the Guardian has endeavoured to repair that newspaper's reputation for misprints, I must assume that its report yesterday of the Lib Dems' spring conference is accurate, and we can expect an Orwellian police state if Paddy Ashdown comes to power.

It's over Down Under

Poor Jack Cunningham, Labour's shadow heritage secretary, is having to burn the midnight oil rewriting the rewrite of his party's arts manifesto. The first rewrite occurred after his leader Tony Blair visited Australia and was much taken with the then Prime

Minister, Paul Keating's 101-page policy for cultural regeneration, Creative Nation. This could be one of Labour's big ideas for the next election.

Mr Blair told his team. And so Mr Cunningham set about beefing up the party's arts policy. Now that Australia's voters, with barely a thought for Mr Blair or Mr Cunningham, have swept Mr Keating (above) from office, our own Labour Party has decided that a policy associated with yesterday's man might not be such a good idea.



Paul Keating, Minister of the Arts, is having to burn the midnight oil rewriting the rewrite of his party's arts manifesto.

The National Theatre, which is owned by the National Theatre Company, is a well-known institution in the UK. It is a place where many of the country's best actors and actresses perform. The theatre is a place of great beauty and it is a place where many of the country's best plays are performed. The theatre is a place of great importance and it is a place where many of the country's best plays are performed.

A heavenly way to go, pop-pickers ...

I doubt that Led Zeppelin intended the title of their classic rock song "Stairway To Heaven" to be taken quite as literally as the disc jockey Alan Freeman seems to have taken it. Sixty-eight-year-old Freeman, just two years away from being radio's first septuagenarian pop broadcaster, told BBC's *Pebble Mill* how he would like to make his final broadcast.

"I would like to think I can go on perhaps for another couple of years, and possibly have a fatal heart attack and go just like that while I'm playing 'Stairway To Heaven'. I think that would be wonderful."

Unfortunately, fate has a habit of not granting us our dearest wishes. Beware a coronary mid-way between Kylie Minogue and the weather report.

Screening out violence

Among the welter of "violence in society" articles that have followed Dunblane, I was interested to see Andrew Neil in the *Sunday Times* sounding off against violent films on television. He writes: "The violence on British television is less graphic than in the cinema, though the Hollywood 'splatter movies' shown at night on satellite television are a disgrace that no self-respecting adults should watch, much less let their children near."

Quite. I urge that he takes the matter up with the founding chief executive of Sky TV, Mr Andrew Neil.

Unhealthy eating

This sign spotted outside a charcuterie in Brussels may not help your appetite: "Buy British Beef here and you won't get better."

Eagle Eye

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V-rated violence

From 1998, new American television sets will have to be fitted with a chip that should allow parents to censor programmes marked in advance by broadcasters according to a ratings system. The V-chip, as it has been christened, is now being promoted nearer home. The European Parliament has declared in its favour. The National Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, said yesterday she wants to evaluate it in the wake of the Dunblane killings. The maverick Liberal Democrat MP David Alton is threatening to amend broadcasting legislation unless she is quick about it.

This is a thorny area. Establishing the precise link between violence on television and violent behaviour is difficult. Even if we accept that there is a link, establishing a consensus on a ratings system would be tortuous. Agreement might be possible on the extremes of fictional violence, but then some of the most violent and horrifying films - Seven, for instance - do not show acts of violence, just some of the results. Beyond that, agreeing on acceptable standards of swearing and sex would be even more difficult.

Even more problematic is the way a V-chip would be quickly outflanked by technology and children's adeptness at using it. The technology of communications cannot be controlled. It respects no national boundaries, social codes or generational precedence. Young children can programme videos and dial up Web

pages at the outer limits of the World Wide Web with a skill that leaves adults in their wake. The new American law is already out of date. It may not cover the television cards that can turn a desktop computer into a television receiver; it does not cover the way television pictures are becoming available over the Internet.

But none of this excuses fatalism. It is adults who pay for their children's surfing habits on the Internet. Adults read Radio Times. It is adults who need to think more clearly about what is fit for viewing or downloading. Welcome efforts are already being made to make exploration of the Internet safer for children by using "system invigilators" that patrol the boundaries of zones which parents might judge unsuitable for children.

As for television, the V-chip can only be "another tool" in parents' hands, as Lady Howe of the Broadcasting Standards Council put it. It cannot substitute for the time and effort good media parenting requires. What it ought to do, however, is open up a debate and help us to refine our thinking about suitability, about the kinds of violence that young viewers ought to be exposed to.

The V-chip only works if broadcasters have agreed a ratings system. One is needed, and one a lot more sophisticated than the existing 9pm "watershed" or the system cinema and video distributors use. That is going to be difficult, but it is high time a start is made.

Tightening the net

Congratulations to Emma Bonino, for putting her head in the Cornish fishermen's den. The European fisheries commissioner's willingness to mend the EU's nets in public is a model other senior Brussels officials should follow. She made few converts on the quayside in Newlyn. But she said three things that are, broadly speaking, true. First, the EU needs a Common Fisheries Policy (CFP); second, it is in the interests of British fishermen to belong to it; third, the present policy has failed and needs to be reworked.

We need a European policy because fish wander. There is no point in protecting the adults in British waters if the piscine children and teenagers are being massacred in, say, Dutch waters. Purely national solutions do not work. The CFP is based on supposedly scientific limits on the number of fish that can be caught. The permitted annual catch is divided into quotas for national fleets. The size of those fleets is not restricted. In theory, at least, the least productive boats in a national fleet should be driven out of business and the industry should find its equi-

librium, with just enough boats catching just enough fish.

However, in practice, that does not happen. Governments pander to fishermen and inflate the catch levels recommended by the scientists. The policing of quotas and net sizes has been inadequate. British fishermen were rightly incensed by the recent European Court decision allowing member states to poach each other's quotas by registering fishing vessels in other countries ("quota-hopping"). This makes sense under single market rules, but it blows the CFP apart.

As a result of loopholes such as this, Europe has too many boats chasing too few fish. A more effective solution would be to impose a much stricter system of licensing on boats to restrict the size of fleets. This could be combined with a market to auction and then trade the licenses. This mixture of EU quota setting and market trading for licenses would be much more effective in preserving fish stocks and managing a more orderly contraction of the industry, thereby helping to limit the damage to traditional fishing communities.

Pretty vacant, Pistols

Bill Grundy would be a happy man today. It was Grundy who made the Sex Pistols famous in December 1976. He interviewed them on a teenage television news magazine. They scowled and swore and despised him. His affronted impotence in the face of their disdain symbolised the shock felt by a generation of parents at the arrival of punk.

Were it not for the evident discomfort all those safety pins and ripped jeans caused the older generation, musically mediocre punk may never have taken off. But in part thanks to Grundy's evident displeasure it was irresistible for many young people. If you could shock your parents that much, it had to be worth doing.

Now the Sex Pistols are back, without the sadly departed Sid Vicious. You might think Grundy would be turning in his

grave. But you'd be wrong. The Sex Pistols are back because they are sad, middle-aged entertainers in need of a fast buck and all too happy to exploit the commercial opportunism of a record industry that 20 years ago they led a generation to believe they disdained.

At least the Rolling Stones and Status Quo have never made any pretence of their commercialism. That is part of what makes them such good acts. But the Sex Pistols? Can you imagine all those clashing chords, tuneless songs and pretentious words from people old enough to have negative equity, kids in private schools and personal pensions. They'll probably turn up to the gigs in Volvos.

No, this is Bill Grundy's revenge. For the Sex Pistols have returned as Bill Grundy: well, almost.

The truth ... or the French translation

Did you know that there is a mid-Channel language half-way between France and England which is a mixture of French and English? No, it is not Franglais - indeed, it is as far from Franglais as it is possible to get, being invented by and approved of by the French.

Let me put it another way. I received a letter with a French postmark the other day from the Marquise de MacMahon, a lady of whose existence I had been unaware until that moment. It was in no sense a personal letter, as she seems blissfully unaware of my existence outside a mailing list and merely wants me to buy some of her wines by mail order. In fact, the letter started with the most impersonal opening possible, namely "Dear Sir, dear Madame".

Let me quote some more. "Dear Sir, dear Madame. The earth slowly comes to life again, the green spikes of our daffodils show streaks of yellow, the vines are 'crying' from their final pruning. Symbolic for a religious Easter, with all nature bursting with new energy and promise for the year ahead."

"We are moving into the Chinese year of the Rat, a year that promises prosperity. I hope this includes grape harvests! The 1996 vintage is



MILES KINGSTON

already formed within the eight tiny buds along each pruned vine stem.

"The warm wet winters and springs we have been having these past few years do not help eliminate the various nasty creepy-crawlies or fungi that menace our vineyards. Fortunately, vineyards are inspired by the eternal cycle of hope and faith inherent in any kind of agriculture: every year the crop is going to make the best *millésime* this century!"

"Air the vines a little to allow the full savours and nose to develop. Don't tie the bottles, just bring them straight up from your unheated cellar or pantry, un corked, and as they say in the southern US. Enjoy! Order now and stock up for all those spring festivities, Easter egg-hunt lunches, god-daughters' confirmations, nephews' weddings.... Or just relax after a hard morning digging the

herbaceous border with a well deserved glass of delicious Burgundy...."

The language in which this letter is written is one that no English person on earth has ever written or spoken. It is translator's English, a language that is so tied to the language of origin that a perceptive reader could immediately identify which foreign language is being translated from, even if words such as *vigneron* and *millésime* had not been left untranslated.

This letter from the Marquise is, beyond any doubt, a literal translation from French. Only the French can so easily go into overdrive in the first sentence of a letter. "The earth slowly comes to life again, the green spikes of our daffodils show streaks of yellow, the vines are 'crying' from their final pruning."

In English it sounds ridiculous, but in French it sounds impressively around and semi-poetical. Or, to put it another way, ridiculous.

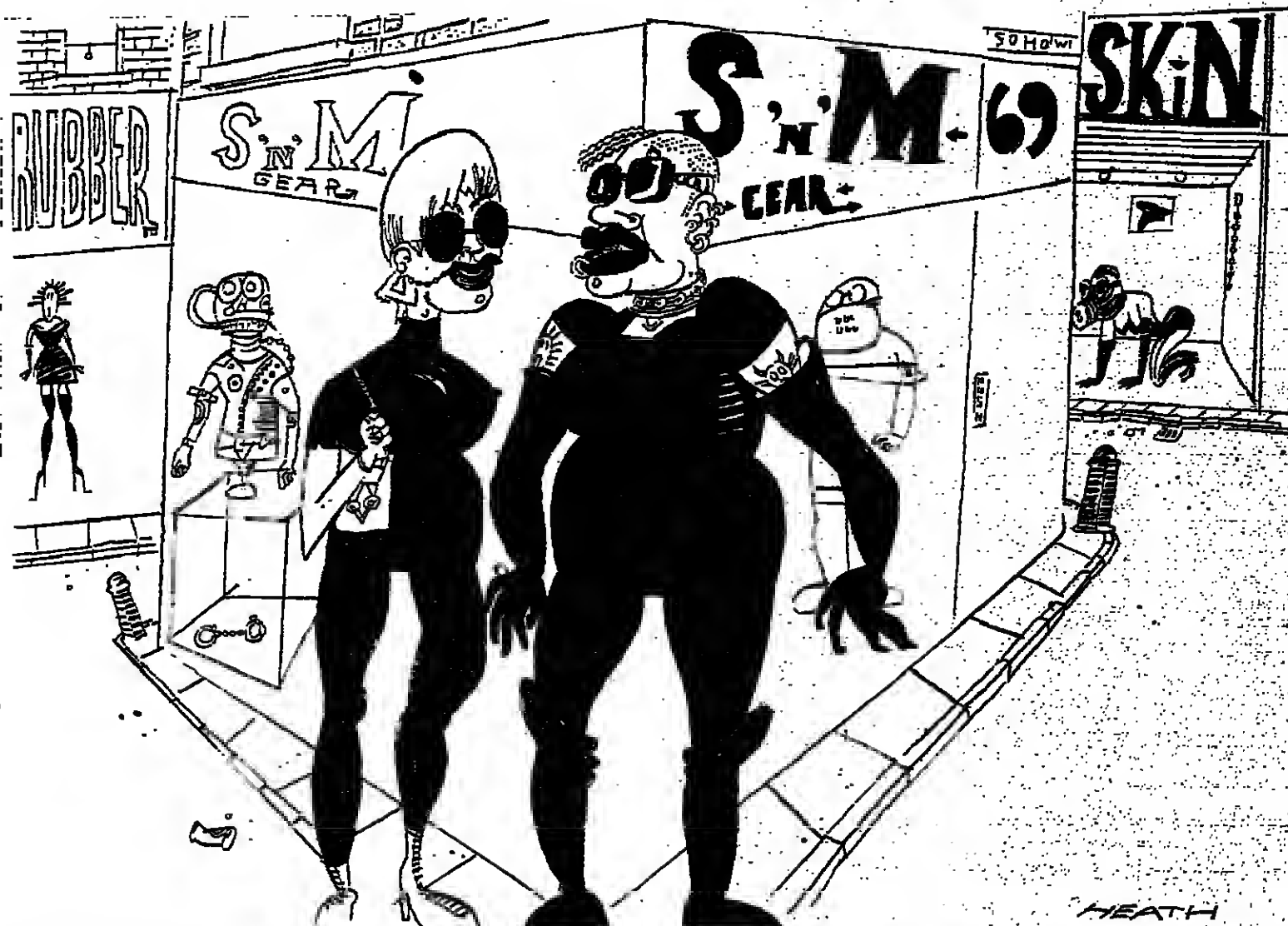
Of course, what is obvious about this letter is that it has been translated, not by a native English-speaker, but by a French person.

A native English-speaker would never say that insects are "menacing" our vineyards. "Menace" is the common word in French, but in

English "threaten" is the common word and "menace" is slightly archaic. Nor, I think, would we use a jokey word like "creepy-crawly", nor would we say that farmers "are inspired by the eternal cycle of hope and faith". Nor would we have untranslated words such as "vigneron" and "millésime". A *vigneron* is a wine-grower, so why not say so? Does it sound more impressive in French?

And it is assumed that we know what a "millésime" is, but I have to admit that I didn't know the word. So I looked it up. And it means "the year of manufacture" or "vintage". The French don't have a word as generally useful as our vintage. Our word "vintage" obviously covers everything covered in French by different words like *cru* and "millésime" and *année de belle récolte* but the French don't know this, so they prefer to use their own word "millésime" even though we don't know what it means.

Put it another way. A proper English translation of the original French would go like this: "Dear customer, Well, spring is here again and with any luck we'll have a good harvest this year, so I am enclosing our list of this year's prices..."



"One of my clients is a politician, and all he wants to do is come back to my place, and I have to ask him for a referendum!"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

After Dunblane: questions for the media and an answer to critics of gun clubs

Sir: Do we really need to have every minute detail of the Dunblane tragedy emblazoned across numerous pages of our newspapers? Others may be desensitised enough to cope with every gruesome detail. I struggle simply with the bare facts.

Every child I see I worry about. I have refused to watch TV programmes whose theme is murder, shooting and violence, for how can I watch these "entertainment" when families in Dunblane are living through the reality?

Are you reporting responsibly? Or are you indulging in a journalism which lowers itself to sensationalising violence in a society which already encourages people to fill their minds with these horrors?

KATHRYN WIGGINS
Reading, Berkshire

Sir: The horror at Dunblane seems a prime example of an event where there is tension between public and media interest in the circumstances and the right to privacy of those caught up in the tragedy.

On such occasions would it not be feasible for the media to agree to pooling arrangements whereby the news-gathering was shared, reducing to a reasonable minimum the numbers of visiting journalists and photographers?

BERNARD PAYNE
Cheshire

Sir: I am shocked by Dr Jane Fairweather's letter (16 March). Opening your paper on Thursday morning and seeing those rows of happy faces brought home to me the full horror of this monstrous act as nothing else could have done. I broke down and wept. One cannot comprehend the grief the bereaved families are going through. I cannot believe that your photograph of class P1 could have caused any more stress than they are already suffering.

JOHN BAKER
London SW13

Sir: Perhaps, before condemning the shooting sports, people should attend a match, and see what shooting is really about. They will see none of the likes of Thomas Hamilton, just ordinary citizens having an enjoyable day out. One of the first things they will observe is the strict safety rules, and the responsibility and care every shooter displays to those around him or her.

Shooting is one of the least aggressive sports. It does not promote the use of physical force towards any person. Men and women can compete on equal terms, and people have been known to continue competing well into their seventies.

Shooting teaches children attentiveness, and respect for rules and other people. An 18th-century Swiss writer described shooting events as "a school of morals for the young".

What happened at Dunblane was tragic, but in a society where people are presumed innocent, there will always be some dangerous individuals on the streets. In our helplessness, we try to alleviate our desperation by looking for someone or something to blame. That is all gun control will ever be.

PHILIP COOK
Thornton Heath, Surrey

Sir: Amid the shock generated by the Dunblane killings, we should not make the mistake of seeing these as a rare eruption of incomprehensible evil.

Those of us who work in mental health services are faced daily with patients whose problems have their origins in cruelty and sexual exploitation experienced in childhood. Time and again, one hears stories of appalling, remorseless abuse. Childhoods are destroyed and adult survivors carry a bitter legacy of pain, betrayal, guilt, loss of self-worth and repression. In some, the emotional consequences are intolerable and the result is death by suicide. Such evil takes place every day in every part of this country, often behind facades

of impeccable respectability. It seems likely that Thomas Hamilton was a paedophile whose depraved lusts grew in strength over many years. In many individuals of this sort, such desires and the capacity to exploit others are fed by a diet of degrading pornography.

The events in Dunblane highlight our widespread failure to protect women and children from the depredations of psychopathic males. The response might begin with an immediate crackdown on child pornography and a severe drawing-in of the boundaries of what is acceptable in adult pornography. Those who commit sexual offences against women and children should face harsh and long sentences commensurate with the damage which they cause.

DR J S CALLENDER
Aberdeen

Sir: From different reports in your coverage of the Dunblane tragedy (15 March) I quote two paragraphs.

"Police told the Scottish Secretary privately that they had concerns over Hamilton, but did not have enough evidence to prosecute."

"Last year, Central Scotland Police gave Hamilton a firearms certificate for a 9mm pistol and a .375 revolver, and at the same time, authorised him to buy two more similar weapons."

Is this the same police?

MICHAEL GREEN

Wokingham, Berkshire

Sir: I was disgusted to read in Colin Brown's report (16 March) that "senior Conservative Party figures were dismayed at John Major's joint visit with Tony Blair to the area [Dunblane] and that 'Conservative sources were furious because they felt it gave Mr Blair a political bonus'. Can these Conservatives be named, so that they may be for ever vilified by decent British citizens of all parties?

JOHN CRISP
London SW1

Save Baltics from Russian power

Sir: The present discussion on spheres of influence in Europe ("Silk Curtain" cuts Europe in two once more, 16 March) strikes the Baltic states with horror and trepidation. Under no circumstances should the West agree to the creation of any artificial boundaries in Europe to placate Russia's military. This would only encourage the non-democratic elements in Russia to demand further increases in their sphere of influence.

It is not Russia's prerogative to dictate to nations how they should evolve and it would be much better for her to seek solutions to her own deep internal problems.

Between the wars, at the time of their independence, the Baltic peoples achieved remarkable prosperity, which was lost during Soviet rule. They must have the right to decide on their own whether or not to join the EU or Nato.

PETERIS TERMANIS
London SW16

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax 0171-293 2456; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

New jobs for old NHS chiefs

Sir: I see that we, the taxpayers, can expect a bill approaching £1m for buying surplus senior NHS executives out of their contracts. Surely there is a better way.

One possibility is some form of training, to equip them to do a better managerial job in future in the NHS. Ideally I would suggest they work out their contracts as hospital porters - a post from which they will see the realities of the NHS with new eyes. Sadly, they would probably argue that this constitutes constructive dismissal.

Alternatively, they should be

formed into a committee with the remit of negotiating for people in their position to leave the NHS with no more than six months' pay in lieu of notice. They would be dealing with their peers, and could hardly deny that this is a challenging task. It should be clearly understood that failure to reach such an agreement within three months would be indicative of incompetence to hold office at their level, and render them liable for dismissal without notice.

DR A M HULME
Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands

No point in technology at school

Sir: Mike Heath, Director General of the Engineering Council, believes that teaching technology in Britain's schools will improve our engineering base, on which he feels our economy depends (Letters, 16 March).

I understand that there is a looming crisis in the health service due to a predicted shortage of GPs. Does Mr Heath feel we should be teaching our children how to diagnose illness and prescribe treatments?

As an engineer myself, I know

that the foundation of all the engineering disciplines is science and mathematics. Until adequate standards in these subjects are achieved in our schools it is absurd to attempt to teach children the vocational subjects that depend on them. The place for vocational teaching is in colleges and universities. Even these cannot succeed unless students arrive from the school system adequately prepared.

IAN QUAYLE
Helensburgh, Strathclyde

One nation in front of the TV

Sir: Jeffrey Richards asserts ("BBC's voice of two nations", 13 March) that the success of two apparently different BBC dramas, the gritty *Our Friends in the North* and the romantic *Pride and Prejudice* points to a country with polarised tastes and attitudes. He looks back to the Fifties and a Reithian BBC which "cemented the nation with a unitary voice".

It is not far-fetched to maintain that a broadcasting monopoly could happily bond a class-ridden society made up of avaricious consumers, jealous trade unionists and angry teddy-boys? The Fifties reality, of course, was an unhappy compromise of viewers completely unspoilt for choice and sitting around what were often BBC-only television sets watching programmes of little interest.

Were the audience profiles for *Our Friends in the North* and *Pride and Prejudice* that different? Both were historical dramas: one began with sex and the promise of more to come, the other captivated viewers with the eventuality of sex. I suggest that far more viewers than Professor Richards might imagine were riveted to both.

GEORGE FISHER
Broughton, Cumbria

Train beats car

Sir: For some twenty-five years as commuter I have driven the 20 miles to central London and each year the queues get longer and the serious incidents more regular and it becomes necessary to leave that few minutes earlier to avoid this distance taking up to an hour and a half.

Until now, I have discovered the train, a fast and efficient chariot galloping across the countryside and trotting through the suburbs to decant me within the Square Mile unfettered and content.

The only drawback is the expense. Even against my thirsty limousine, it is more than twice the cost. There must be a case for the Government to subsidise public transport, to help the environment and massage our tempers.

F WILSON
Broxbourne, Hertfordshire

Employment law out of date

Sir: Dr John McMullen is right to remind us that unfair dismissal protection was introduced to offer people a "civilised" way of dealing with a problem, rather than through industrial action ("Size really doesn't matter to workers", 13 March).

Removing employment rights from millions of people cannot be the best way of relieving job insecurity, or producing a "feel-good factor". The consequences for social cohesion, when firms are able to generate rising profits with fewer people, have not yet been fully explored. Working arrangements are increasingly so diverse and flexible that the time has clearly come for a fundamental review of employment legislation.

TONY MORGAN
Chief Executive
The Industrial Society,
London W1

Fighting flab?

Sir: Your report on the "disease" of obesity (13 March) describes the Body Mass Index (weight in kilos divided by height in metres squared) and says a person with an index over 25 is considered overweight, and over 30 obese.

For the Bruno/Tyson fight on Saturday, Bruno weighed in at 111 kilos with a height of 1.91 metres - an index of 30.43. Tyson, too, has an index above 30. Are these superb athletes obese? Clearly other factors are important in making medical judgements about body weight.

CHARLES LOVING
Newport, Isle of Wight

Reclaim cities

Sir: Our town and city centres already have too many shops and offices ("The one-stop shop comes one step closer", 15 March). The current business exodus gives an excellent opportunity to return the centres to their proper role - a place for people to live, not just to visit between 9am and 5pm.

LEN PARRICK
Leeds

Paddy's libertarian mission

The Lib Dem leader's speech, which scorns the puritanical zeal of new Labour, is a breath of fresh air

News flash: an interesting political speech was made at the weekend. Deflating second flash: it was made by Paddy Ashdown. This is deflating not because Ashdown is a secondary figure at Westminster, though he is, but because he has made some interesting speeches before; indeed, being "interesting" is one of the Liberal Democrat leader's more dangerous hobbies.

He is treated atrociously by the political elite - mocked, sneered at, never taken seriously, by which they mean outspoken, disdainful and insufficiently respectful of their authority. And indeed, he is in many ways more like a political commentator than a politician except that he, unlike us, goes round the country talking to people. He saturates himself in the anti-Westminster atmosphere. His wife once told me that she had been rung up late at night by the Liverpool police to warn her that somebody was impersonating her husband, loitering in a dangerous and drug-infested area of the city with a crowd of Rastafarians. "That's my Paddy," she instantly replied.

But his very isolation from the main currents of Westminster has enabled Ashdown to think widely and speak with rare freedom. His weekend speech was typical of his best in being thought through, vivid, provocative and even, in key parts, plausible (thus breaking every important rule of contemporary political rhetoric).

Briefly put, it started with the familiar thought that globalisation and individualism had between them changed our world. The old model of politics, by which "governments could, by and

large, deliver what their people wanted; and so people, by and large, believed in government" was being destroyed.

But, whereas most politicians adopt a mournful or reactionary posture when confronting this thought, Ashdown sounded positively chipper. "The age of deference, if not quite dead, is dying on its feet. And the age of the individual is coming along famously. We're seeing the beginning of the end of the politics of class and nation."

The Conservatives, he said, were responding to globalisation by trying to make Britain ever more free-market, a smaller version of the United States, with its ghettos and widening social rifts. Labour was trying to create a new "state-sponsored morality" to rebuild Britain in the image of Singapore. The real answer, however, was a politics based round "self-reliant individuals", a politics of education, reform and tolerance.

Thus far, the speech pursued traditional Liberal tactics, painting the two big parties as extreme, and proposing a "sensible" middle-of-the-road alternative. However, when Ashdown listed the policies his individualist party was actually committed to, they sounded identical to new Labour's. On education, support for small business, long-term investment, welfare reform, constitutional change, this was a speech that could have been made by Tony Blair.

It was only when he turned to morality and power that Ashdown sounded a truly different note, laying out a code that reverses some traditional teaching, yet is clear and principled itself. It abhors homophobia rather than homosexuality. It



ANDREW MARR

Ashdown seems intent on becoming 'differently popular'

The emphasis on people's responsibilities, rather than their rights, begins well enough, he said. "But it ends by telling people how to live their lives - by limiting freedom of speech, by spot fines for chewing gum and neglecting to pull the lavatory chain. It ends in policies which punish the sinner but ignore the sin."

Attacking new Labour's illiberal streak would be less impressive, had Ashdown not marked his party out by taking some brave specific stands, notably on gays in the military. This is unlikely to do him any electoral good. But, as on drugs, censorship, civil liberties and other issues, the Liberal Democrats here show themselves genuinely principled.

We don't yet have a word for it, but there is a code that reverses some traditional teaching, yet is clear and principled itself. It abhors homophobia rather than homosexuality. It

rejects beliefs about women, racial differences, Hell and sin that underpin Judeo-Christian teaching. It is "liberal" in a way that owes more to Bloomsbury and Martin Luther King than Gladstone or Adam Smith.

More than economics, voting reform or localism this provides the core belief-system of the Liberal Democrats. Ashdown spoke of a society that would "encourage diversity... be heedless of gender or sexual orientation. It will celebrate experimentation. And it will value pluralism and the wide richness of ethnic traditions and cultures in Britain today." New Labour would agree, in principle, yet never use those words. That is not the enthusiasm of the communitarians and social moralists of the left, searching for security in a turbulent world.

There is an important division opening in politics between individualism and community, between those who stress rights and those who stress duty. It is not a normal left-right division. It zig-zags through the Labour Party and through the Conservatives. Both have libertarians and moralists in their ranks.

It fractures the uncommitted majority of thinking society, too. It is very much a thing of our uncertain, harassed times. It could be caricatured as the division between people who enjoy Tarantino films and people who worry about them, or between natural born rebels and natural magistrates.

And the rebels have cast Blair and Jack Straw as the villains of the drama, puritans whose instincts are as authoritarian as Oliver Cromwell's. At one

level, Ashdown's speech could be summarised as "the Lib Dems equal Labour minus Straw".

In fact, both Straw and new Labour generally are about much more than populism. There is a wider yearning for security, order and greater social trust that is felt on the streets and preached by economists, think-tanks and intellectuals. It is not the centrally imposed morality that Ashdown attacks, but it certainly is a response to his twin forces of globalisation and individualism.

And the Liberal Democrats are against it. After their Nottingham conference they look ever more like the libertarian party in British politics. This is probably a niche market, but it is a very important niche for someone to stand in.

As a bit of a puritan myself, I am glad that Ashdown is standing there. We are undergoing that dreary narrowing of the political agenda that precedes a general election and he is a cheering addition to the game. At least some of what he says doesn't seem calculated for party advantage. Indeed, after Nottingham, he seems intent on becoming, in the appropriate jargon of political correctness, "differently popular".

And if a Labour government ever was dependent on Ashdown votes, we know what sort of influence he'd aspire to be - in the darkest watches of the night and the darkest corners of Whitehall he would be a safeguard against illiberalism or authoritarianism. These days, the Labour left worries desperately about the prospect of having to share power with the Lib Dems. I really can't see why.

Censored: the V-chip's real aim

Julian Petley suspects that supporters of a device to screen out TV violence have a hidden agenda

At first sight the V-chip, which is being promoted by the Government as the answer to TV violence, looks like rather a good idea. Parents with their fingers on the electronic key would be able to protect their children from programmes that might disturb them, while they themselves would retain the ability to watch more "adult" material.

This way, we are saved from the television diet recommended by those politicians, such as Roger Gale, chair of the Conservative backbench media committee, in which nothing would be allowed on at any time that might disturb any child who might be watching. But would it work like that? I doubt it.

If we're concerned with irresponsible parents who let their children watch unsuitable television programmes, why should we suppose that they are going to discover a sense of responsibility towards their children when they acquire a new television fitted with this gizmo? Also, as it is a statistical fact that more children than adults can work video recorders, we can't be at all sure that some of them won't find ways of subverting the chip. Indeed, I can imagine some techno-brats fixing it so that it's the parents who can't watch their favourite programme if it clashes with their offspring's choice on another channel.

Next, who's going to work out the rating system on which the effectiveness of the chip will depend? Different verdicts are sometimes handed out on the same programmes by the Broadcasting Standards Council, the BBC Programme Complaints Unit and the Independent Television Commission. There is no consensus on the standards and values that would have to form the basis for any such rating system. And even if such a consensus could be forged among the terrestrial broadcasters, would the satellite broadcasters agree to it? The movie channels, for example, argue that their encrypted signal enables them to broadcast "stronger" versions of certain films that are shown cut on BBC, ITV or C4.

Satellite television is part of the internationalisation of broadcasting, which is why the EU is also considering introducing V-chips. Would any British ratings system have to be harmonised with a possible European one? This would present considerable problems, since most of our continental neighbours are far less troubled about what is shown on their

television screens than we are about ours, and they are most certainly not going to be swayed by what they regard as Anglo-Saxon puritanism. It would indeed be ironic if, thanks to the proponents of the chip, Britain was eventually forced to accept a more, as opposed to less, liberal regime of television regulation.

Finally, what do the chip's supporters really want? The Liberal Democrat MP David Alton said yesterday that he intended to put down a V-chip amendment to the Broadcasting Bill if the Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, did not decide to legislate, and added that a number of Tory

Techno-brats will fix it so parents can't watch their TV favourites

MPs had promised him their support.

But does he want a world where children are protected from disturbing images while adults sit around happily watching "stronger" stuff, safe in the knowledge that the satisfaction of their pleasures isn't causing distress elsewhere? I don't think so. It was Mr Alton who spearheaded the campaign in 1994 to make video censorship, already among the toughest in the world, even more stringent.

The lobby group Movement for Christian Democracy, of which Mr Alton is a member, congratulated itself on its "campaign triumph in video battle", and added that "the victory on violent videos is the first battle in a continuing campaign". Now the V-chip presents the campaign with an opportunity to do battle again.

By all means let's have a sensible debate about the V-chip. But let's have all the cards on the table please. If some of the proponents of the chip are trying to use this issue as a way of advancing their own, very particular agenda, let's know about it. And if their real object is not simply the protection of children but the diminution of what adults may see on television, then let's hear it loud and clear.

The writer, who lectures in communication studies at Brunel University, is co-editing a book on how the media influences people, to be published by Routledge later this year.

Big Brother buys our loyalty

Shopping smart cards are being used to gather information on our personal lives. Do we care?

My life has changed. I am known as never before. My movements and habits are tracked, implicated, counted. Electronically, I am watched by British Airways, BT, Shell, the National Westminster Bank, even, weirdly, by John Menzies.

These companies have bought my acquiescence in this surveillance by offering me the magic of Air Miles. Soothingly, respectfully, they say: look, you buy petrol, make phone calls or use credit cards anyway, so why not use ours? It's a painless, cost-free decision and, to reward you for making it, we will give you free air travel, the supreme luxury of the modern world.

How could I resist? Anything other than Shell petrol is now unthinkable.



BRYAN APPLEYARD

and my Visa and American Express cards languish unused in my wallet. For the moment I can think of nothing I wish to buy at John Menzies, but I will.

This is all, of course, made possible by information technology. I do almost nothing new, yet quantum physics and silicon chips ensure that the things I habitually do are automatically logged and rewarded. We note this newly discovered phenomenon of your loyalty, say the companies, and, electronically, we embrace you, we love you.

And loyalty is what they call it, even though I have, in reality, been bribed and feel no moral or emotional commitment to Shell as opposed to BP, NatWest as opposed to Amex. I'm just in it for the Miles. But the companies don't mind; loyalty to them means only mindless repetition, they require no movement of my soul, no careful consumer assessment of their goods.

Loyalty marketing - sometimes called, even more intimately, "relationship marketing" - is the Big New Thing in corporate thinking. It has begun to infect almost every transaction down to the most fleeting. Buy a coffee these days and the café will probably offer you 10p off the next latte or cappuccino, just to make you, in commercial terms, "loyal".

But the real loyalty action is happening in the big corporate computer databases. These have given companies the power not just to know people, in general, but people in particular. Take up Tesco's loyalty card and



somebody at head office will know exactly what you buy; idly allow yourself to be hooked into Heinz's system and you will receive a magazine specifically edited to respond to your personal buying patterns.

The first effect of this new power is to expose the appalling inefficiency of traditional advertising. However big a brand - Coca-Cola, Guinness, Heinz Baked Beans, whatever - the reality is that it is actually bought by only a small minority of the total population. Yet the usual advertising approach is to shout at, cajole or wheedle everybody. Inevitably, any such ad will be wasted on the overwhelming majority of its audience. But relationship marketing is a magic bullet that targets only those who are

genuinely likely to buy or have already bought.

It is also a way of getting round one awkward fact of modern life: most of the stuff we buy is so utterly banal and undifferentiated that ordinary advertising has lost its persuasive power. This even applies to something as apparently exciting as a car. Consider the two TV campaigns now running for the Peugeot 406 and the Vauxhall Vectra. The first suggests that the 406 will help you to "search for the hero inside yourself" and the second implies that the Vectra is a futuristic, sci-fi vehicle miraculously available now. Yet both are utterly dull mid-range saloons, indistinguishable from the competition. The rhetoric of these fabulously outdated, hugely incom-

petent ads looks absurd. We care for neither car since we know the claims to be meaningless.

Clearly, traditional advertising will continue. The Peugeot and Vauxhall ads may make dealers feel good and may provide some rather tenuous reinforcement for people who have bought one of these bland runabouts. But on the whole, it will have to change. The big traditional branding successes of recent years - Nike, Orange, Tango, Microsoft - have been based on a deliberate avoidance of such crudity. Instead, they appeal to the young and zany (Tango), the seeker after authenticity (Nike), the globalised loner (Orange) or the technologically anxious (Microsoft). These are personalities that appear true

because they are so contemporary, they refer to the Nineties sense of being part of yet also alienated from the economic system.

But relationship marketing will be where the real selling happens in the future. For not only does it work but, strangely, we love it. This is strange because, in fact, its connotations are rather sinister. It depends, above all, on our willingness to allow ourselves to be watched, to let the details of our lives be logged on computers far beyond our control. Twenty years ago we would have recoiled in horror at the idea; it would have seemed such an assault on our freedom and privacy. Yet now it seems obvious, routine, clearly desirable.

This movement towards accep-

The technological culture is not a nightmare but a welcome convenience

tance of the wired culture is a general phenomenon. Once the idea of surveillance cameras on street corners would have seemed an outrage. Now it is accepted as a commonsense measure against crime and terrorism. The technological culture, in which our lives are examined, cross-referenced and used by agencies and in ways of which we know nothing, is not, it seems, a nightmare but a welcome convenience.

This has happened, I think, because we have all become technological determinists. All this is going to happen whatever we say or do, so resistance is pointless. The qualms of 1984 or Brave New World seem like the remote, futile anxieties of another culture. The electronic system, the Net with its fabulous appetite for personal detail, is here whether we like it or not. What choice do we have but to accept its presence, to co-operate with its exotic system of goods and rewards?

At a deeper level, I think we also find all this consoling. The systems that lock us into these networks of companies, even the system that watches our movements on the street, feel friendly. When I buy my Shell and collect my Miles, somebody or something recognises me. Mad as it may seem, I accept the mercenary flattery. We all do because for that moment it feels better than the usual blank impersonality of the wired world.

But then the Orwellian conscience kicks in. Where is all this information going? What awful correlations is it generating? And do I care enough to stop collecting Air Miles?

convention, Britain among them, believe that it is better to be pragmatic and get the many non-members to sign up to the limits set out by the convention than to call for a total ban. However, a clarion call for an outright ban, as a stated long-term objective, may bring in support for the more limited measures and lead to a speedier advance in the laws of armed conflict.

The major military powers must take the lead, as they have done on export moratoria, if they are to reduce the awful consequences of this weapon's misuse.

Col Terence Taylor is assistant director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. These are his personal views.

Land-mines are everyone's enemy

ANOTHER VIEW

Terence Taylor

he is now inclined to support a total ban on anti-personnel land-mines. His statement echoed the view of many countries and the Red Cross.

Until now the US and the UK have taken a more measured approach by halting exports and seeking to strengthen legal controls regulating the use of mines. But this may not be enough to galvanise international action to deal effectively with a problem that worsens by the day.

Mines continue to be laid in large numbers. About half of those injured die of their injuries, while most of the

survivors lose one or more limbs. In most of the conflict areas, specialised treatment and artificial limbs are not available. The casualties become a burden on their families. Whole communities are prevented from working their agricultural land.

But the strongest case against these weapons lies in their indiscriminate

nature. The overwhelming majority of them remain in place long after their military purpose is over: most victims are in the end non-combatants, placing these weapons in a class apart from other conventional weapons.

There is an ongoing review of the UN Convention, which sets rules on the use of mines. One proposal is to allow the use only of mines that self-destruct within a set period after being laid. Another is to permit only mines that can be detected by available mine-clearing technologies.

A number of the 57 parties to the

If you sponsor Shomita,



no one will have to sponsor her children

Little Shomita is just six years old and the only life she's known is one of hunger, poverty and disease. But by the time she has children of her own, this could be a very different story.

It could be one about families, about villages, working together to earn their own living. About children who can read and write and have a future. About a community that can treat the sick and is free from fatal diseases. And if it is, it is because you care enough to sponsor a child.

In return, we'll keep you in touch with regular reports from our field workers plus a photograph and messages from the child you sponsor.

Please sponsor a child today. With your help, we really can change the future.

Please sponsor a child today.

Please send me details about sponsoring a child, or call 01480 61073.

☐ Name ☐ Address ☐ Where there's a parent's name

☐ I can't sponsor a child now, but would like a gift at:

☐ £20 ☐ £30 ☐ £50 ☐ £75 ☐ £100

Like sponsorships, please tick ACTIONAID and send to: ACTIONAID, FREEPOST

50865, Great Cornard, Suffolk IP13 9SE

16561

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

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ACTIONAID

Bad news continues as BAT tries to reassure investors

DAVID USBORNE
New York
TOM STEVENSON
London

A flood of bad news from around the world continued to dog BAT yesterday even as a hastily convened analysts and investors meeting in London was being reassured about the impact of a landmark legal settlement by US tobacco rival Liggett last week.

Brown and Williamson, BAT's US-based subsidiary, is under investigation by a federal grand jury over claims that it knew about an operation to smuggle its cigarettes into Canada to avoid Canadian taxes.

In a separate development in India, BAT was also hit yesterday by an unexpectedly harsh court order forcing its 32 per cent Indian subsidiary ITC to deposit 3.5bn rupees (\$101m) pending an appeal against an 8bn rupee fine for tax evasion.

As this bad news flowed in, industry watchers in London were told by a BAT lawyer that Liggett's settlement of a US class action, which alleged that tobacco companies deliberately manipulated nicotine levels in cigarettes to encourage addiction, would not change the state of its own litigation.

The Liggett settlement had sent tobacco company share prices plunging last week as investors feared that the industry's long-maintained united front against legal attacks had started to crumble. BAT fell further yesterday, closing down 12p at 488p.

The lawyer restated BAT's view that the Liggett settlement was simply a sideshow in an attempt by Liggett's controlling shareholder, Bennett LeBow, to gain control of the second largest American cigarette maker RJR Nabisco.

The latest US probe, which could result in the filing of criminal charges against Brown and Williamson executives, is one of five grand jury investigations into the tobacco industry currently being pursued under the auspices of the US Justice Department, the *New York Times* said yesterday.

The newspaper reported that the five investigations could lead to jail terms for some of the industry's most senior executives and that several of them had already taken steps to hire high-priced criminal defence lawyers. The sense of siege among the cigarette manufacturers was also compounded by a separate report in the *Wall Street Journal* that a former scientist at Philip Morris, the US's largest cigarette maker, had testified that the company knew about the addictive qualities of nicotine and manipulated nicotine levels.

Merging societies may get protection from predators

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

The Government sought yesterday to kick-start mergers in the beleaguered building society movement by proposing restrictions on hostile takeovers. Presenting the draft Bill on building societies, Angela Knight, the Treasury Minister, suggested ring-fencing societies which have decided to merge against outside bids for up to a year.



Angela Knight: Proposals to restrict hostile takeovers

"We want to make sure that building societies feel they can continue to do their traditional mergers. At the moment they feel this not to be practical, because as soon as they announce a merger, they get into the firing line for a predatory takeover," she said.

The Government will be looking for responses from the market to its suggestions and the draft legislation, over the coming three months. Introducing the Bill, Mrs Knight, who described herself as a "fan of building societies," said it aimed to provide a permissive legal framework instead of the prescriptive legislation that currently governs the movement. "I think what the Bill does is ensure building societies have a level playing field, and can do more while remaining mutual," she said.

The need for reform has been pointed up by a recent rush to convert, which has seen three of the four biggest building societies announce their intention to float on the Stock Exchange next year. When the Halifax/Leeds



Peter White: The decision to move out of estate agency comes as part of a cleaning-up process before flotation

A&L pulls out of estate agency

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

The Alliance & Leicester building society said yesterday it was pulling out of the estate agency business, and announced a £40m write-off that took the wind out of profits. Peter White, chief executive, said he hoped to have sold or closed the 70 agencies by late summer.

There was no way we were going to make money out of it. We just had to take a tough decision," he said.

The decision to get out of estate agency is part of the process of cleaning up the balance sheet for A&L's planned flotation on the stock market next spring. The goodwill in the chain, concentrated in East Anglia and the east Midlands, is £25m, with a further £15m coming from redundancy and closure costs.

The write-off held pre-tax profits last year virtually flat at £287m, as A&L faced very tough conditions in two of its core business markets: home loans and Girobank, the group's corporate banking side. The mortgage market became increasingly competitive in 1995, with a wider range of discounts, fixed rates and special offers than ever before.

A&L achieved its highest average market share of total UK net mortgage advances at 3.2 per cent, against its "normal" share by market weighting of 5 per cent. But Mr White conceded that earnings on this increased share were slim. "The margins are very tight on new business. But we do not launch anything that does not make a profit," he said.

'Buyers back' in housing market

The new year recovery in the housing market continued last month, with nearly three quarters of estate agents reporting higher activity, writes Diane Coyle. Buyers have been encouraged by interest rate cuts and excellent mortgage deals, according to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Its regular survey of members for the three months to February found 62.6 per cent reporting an increase in business of up to 10 per cent, while nearly one in eight said activity had grown by 25-50 per cent. Only 5 per cent reported a decrease compared with three months earlier.

Prices were flat, however. More than four fifths of the estate agents said selling prices were the same as three months ago. The survey commented that recovery was in danger of being held back by sellers who had been encouraged by positive reports and decided to hold out for a better price.

David Baker, an estate agent in Penarth, near Cardiff, said: "There is definitely more activity but let us not get carried away with the thought that prices will rise. There is a lot of slack to be taken up first."

Dennis Chapman in Scarborough, described the market as "still very patchy with only the realistically-priced properties finding purchasers."

John Pocock of Pocock and Shaw in Cambridge was more optimistic. "Houses generally are proving to be much more readily saleable and the situation appears to be better than any time in the past 12 months."

groups:
Pearson takeover after mixe

PSBR heads towards £3bn overshoot

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Government borrowing is likely to be £2bn to £3bn over target this financial year, limiting Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's scope for tax cuts in the next budget.

The most serious slippage in the public sector finances is alarmingly slow growth in government revenues. Tax receipts are likely to be up in £2bn lower than forecast at the time of last November's budget - and £7bn lower than the level predicted in the previous budget.

Spending by Whitehall is also running ahead of plans and could overshoot by about £1bn, unless some expenditure can be clawed back successfully this month. This could be difficult in a month when departments have usually rushed to spend as much as possible before the year-end.

Andrew Smith, shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said: "Public borrowing is still running at a very high level, reflecting weakness rather than strength in the economy."

The Treasury said borrowing remained on a downward trend, a conclusion backed by most

City analysts. "There is now some clear improvement in the public finances this year compared to last," said Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe.

However, many thought future borrowing would also overshoot the Budget plans, thanks to tax cuts announced last November taking effect and the 4 per cent pay awards in the public sector. Kevin Durlington at Hoare Govett said borrowing would continue to shrink but would remain above the Maastricht ceiling of 3 per cent of GDP.

The gap between government revenues and spending was £3bn in February, the last but one month of the financial year. It would have been higher, except for an unexpected £1.5bn in privatisation receipts from BAA shares, electricity company bonds and the second part of the Genoa sale.

Revenues have increased 9 per cent this financial year, compared to a Budget forecast of 9.6 per cent for the full year. Lower inflation has led to slower revenue growth. VAT receipts account for much of the

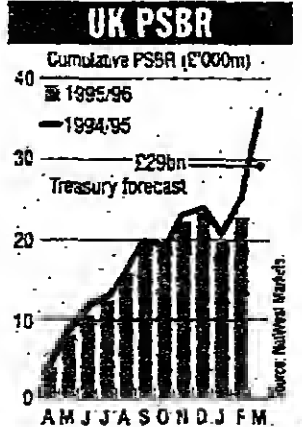
shortfall, possibly due to lower spending on consumer goods liable for VAT.

Spending was up 4.3 per cent in the 11 months to February, above the Budget forecast of 3.8 per cent for the year as a whole.

Debt interest payments have been higher than expected, at £21.5bn since last April compared to £19.1bn at the same stage last financial year. Local authorities are also likely to be in the red. They made a monthly debt repayment of £757m in February, and have repaid £0.7bn in 11 months. However,

they have borrowed £1.6bn on average every March to use up the remainder of their annual budget. If the pattern is normal this year, they are unlikely to meet the target of a £0.1bn debt repayment for the full year.

Economists said that on last month's trends, the full-year Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR) would be £31.32bn, compared with a target of £29bn set in the November budget. This is much smaller than the Treasury's average £110bn error in forecasting the next year's PSBR.



Juppé abandons plan to sell off France Telecom

MARY FAGAN
and MARY DEJEVSKY

The French government has abandoned the privatisation of France Telecom, the monopoly telephone network operator, in an apparent attempt to appease trade unions and employees.

Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, ended months of speculation by saying that the company's statute would be changed to meet the challenge of competition when the European telecommunications market is opened up on 1 January 1998, but that it would remain in state control.

Mr Juppé said that the state would retain a majority stake in France Telecom with employees preserving their status as public employees and the benefits of secure employment and pensions.

However, the government angered one of the main trade unions, Force Ouvrière, by accepting the principle of an independent regulatory authority outside both France Telecom and the government.

The independence and strength of the regulator has been of great concern to BT and other operators who wish to compete in French public telephony. A spokesman for BT said: "It is also important that there should be the appropriate pro-competition law in place."

Mr Juppé said that France Telecom would be required to evolve to compete "on an equal footing with its competitors" - and that a Bill ensuring the necessary changes would be laid before the French parliament this spring.

The decision to stop short of wholesale privatisation will be seen as a blow to François Fillon, the minister of post and telecommunications, who had called for rapid sell-off. The cautious wording of the statement appeared to reflect the French government's concern not to provoke a repetition of events last November, when

plans to restructure the state railway company, SNCF, and alter public sector pension arrangements, sparked off four weeks of strikes and protests and paralysed the national rail network. As part of the price of a return to work, the government had to abandon the whole SNCF restructuring plan.

A recent report from the prime minister's office found that the "special status" of France's public sector was not incompatible with EU deregulation. However, it remains unclear whether privatisation has been ruled out completely or merely postponed for the foreseeable future.

There is also uncertainty as to whether the pledge to preserve the public service status of employees will extend to those recruited after the law is changed.

GEC confir



George defends Bank's policy

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, defended the Bank yesterday against the charge that it is "congenitally pessimistic", writes Diane Coyle. The Bank had to err slightly on the side of caution, he said, "in order to build up policy credibility against the background of the UK's unhappy track record."

It had also been less over-optimistic about inflation than many other forecasters, he said in a speech to the Swedish

Economics Association. Critics were wrong to conclude that the Bank wanted to bias the economy towards deflation.

Mr George added that the Bank's concern with the control of inflation was, "as a means to the end of sustained growth in activity and employment."

The current state of demand did not, the Bank's calculations through its inflation forecast, but this was an uncertain process.

The Governor conceded that

the fact that most people think forecasts are either right or wrong meant setting interest rates according to forecasts of the economy two years hence could "weaken the operational credibility of policy". The Bank could not afford to consistently overdo its caution.

Despite these difficulties, the inflation target was better than the alternative. Shadowing and then joining the Exchange Rate Mechanism had been a "disaster" in his view.

STOCK MARKETS									
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	Yield (%)	Index	Close	Day's change
FTSE 100	3668.60	+24.80	+0.7	3781.30	2954.20	4.04	Nikkei	21100	+100
FTSE 250	4244.50	+17.30	+0.4	4280.00	3300.90	3.48	Dow Jones	7909	+20
FTSE 350	1844.20	+11.40	+0.6	1889.00	1462.40	3.92	FTSE Small Cap	2070.31	+3.39
FT All Share	1823.79	+10.61	+0.6	1864.59	1469.23	3.85	FT All Share	1823.79	+10.61
New York	5633.03	+48.06	+0.9	5642.42	3832.08	2.15	Tokyo	20265.13	+94.28
Hong Kong	10601.28	+43.70	+0.4	11119.48	6967.83	3.48	Hong Kong	10601.28	+43.70
Frankfurt	2463.16	+4.35	+0.2	2501.22	1910.96	1.94	Frankfurt	2463.16	+4.35

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling					UK medium gov				
Rate	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	Rate	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year
UK	5.94	6.34	6.11	6.55	6.22	6.44			
US	5.34	5.99	6.43	7.12	7.11	7.40			
Japan	0.12	0.53	3.19	3.44					
Germany	5.34	3.41	6.54	7.13	7.27				
Bond Yields									
Rate	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	Rate	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	5.94	6.34	6.11	6.55	6.22	6.44			
US	5.34	5.99	6.43	7.12	7.11	7.40			
Japan	0.12	0.53	3.19	3.44					
Germany	5.34	3.41	6.54	7.13	7.27				

CURRENCIES									
Unit	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	Yield (%)	Unit	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low	Yield (%)	Unit	1995/96 High
£/\$	1.5317	0.7900	1.582	£/DM	0.6529	0.34	0.632	£/¥	164.01
£/DM	0.6529	0.34	0.632	DM/¥	164.01	1.3973		¥/£	164.01
DM/¥	164.01	1.3973		¥/£	164.01	1.3973		¥/DM	164.01
¥/£	164.01	1.3973		¥/DM	164.01	1.3973		¥/£	164.01
¥/DM	164.01	1.3973		¥/£	164.01	1.3973		¥/DM	164.01

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COMMENT

Takeover rules are usually designed to protect the rights of investors, but Angela Knight's half-baked suggestion appears, by contrast, designed more to protect building society directors'

Muddled thinking in the building societies Bill

There is something false and hypocritical about the Government's sudden concern for that endangered species, the building society. Belatedly and half-heartedly, the Government seems to have decided there is something worth protecting in the mutually owned building society tradition. Even as a piece of well-meant conservation, however, the building societies Bill looks a masterpiece of muddled thinking and irrelevance.

Certainly the Government's "Mutuality for the next Millennium" proposals might better have been presented by Virginia Bottomley than Angela Knight. As Heritage Secretary, Mrs Bottomley is at least meant to tend those threatened corners that everyone wants to keep forever England. Given the alarming rate at which societies have been abandoning mutuality and opting for conversion to quoted company status, the Heritage Secretary's time may yet come.

For the moment, though, it is Angela Knight at the Treasury who is hoping to hold back the tide by offering societies which soldier on a bit more freedom of manoeuvre and some protection from the big bad world of competition outside. The Government wants the stalled process of mergers between building societies kick-started again in the hope that this might produce some powerful mutuals to revitalise the movement. The trouble is that any society that announces a merger is as likely as not to be picked off by predator banks offering tempting windfall profits to their members. Hence the sug-

gestion of a one-year moratorium for mergers, shielding them from predatory advances so they can consult their members in peace and quiet.

But just how is this meant to work in practice? Mrs Knight clearly does not know. If the Bradford & Bingley and Northern Rock, say, were to announce a merger, does this mean Barclays would not be allowed to tell members what sort of alternative deal they might get? Takeover rules are usually designed to protect the rights of investors. Mrs Knight's half-baked suggestion appears, by contrast, designed more to protect building society directors.

Retail financial services in this country have undergone dramatic change in recent years. Competition is intense, and increasing. To survive, building societies must be able to compete on the market's terms, by offering the best deals. This Government, of all, should know that. In the end, it will be market forces, not legislation, that shapes the future of this industry. That would be true even if this draft Bill makes it onto the statute books, which looks a long shot given the likely timing of the next election.

Unlocking value at Pearson

Pearson is a fine company in many respects with some wonderful assets. Like all big companies, however, it occasionally has em-

barrassments. Right now there could be a big one developing in its midst. It is called Mindscape. However good Pearson's general record in acquisition making might be, this one looks like turning into a real bawler.

On the whole, Pearson's acquisition strategy has been well thought out. It has moved impressively to extend its television programming, notably through the acquisition of Thames Television, Grundy Worldwide, and ACI, all of which have added to profits. Publishing has been expanded through the \$580m acquisition of HarperCollins's educational publishing operation, injecting better balance into its range of products for schools and universities.

However, Mindscape, a publisher of CD-Roms, cartridges and floppy discs, for which Pearson paid a handsome £12m in 1994, falls into an altogether different category. This was always meant to be a long term acquisition, a bet on the future. Nonetheless it was also meant to at least break even last year. That is certainly what Pearson told the City to expect. As it is, Mindscape lost £6.9m.

When Pearson carefully warned analysts as recently as December 1995 that operating profits were likely to be below City estimates, it uttered not a word about Mindscape.

The house line is that returns of unsold stock in the new year were higher than expected, and that the bottom fell out of market for floppy discs. Tight pricing in the original equipment manufacturing end of

the CD-Rom market contributed to the malaise, Pearson says. There is clearly more to it than that, however. Evidence of this is in the team of external consultants who are now to comb through the operations and make recommendations for change.

Pearson went to great lengths yesterday to deny persistent reports in the press that Granada had considered mounting a bid for the company last year. But the fact of the matter is that Granada did; it was not an invention of the press. Pearson seems as determined to ignore this unpalatable truth as the persistent losses at Mindscape.

Pearson management is clearly very sensitive about the possibility of a takeover bid. And no wonder. There is much value to be unlocked in a company with such a range of attractive assets.

Management's case is hardly helped by the fact it clearly overpaid for Mindscape. Unless Pearson itself does some of the unlocking (and admittedly recent management restructuring suggests it may do) then someone else will do it instead.

Encourage the French - up to a point

Hackles rise whenever it gets out that a French company has its eyes on a British public service. The idea of Generale des Eaux taking over railway services to Brighton - among other Sussex gems (as

reported on our news pages - will have seasoned commuters shivering over their lippers. It is only a few years since the scandal of the season was the French move into the water industry, which culminated last year in the takeover of Northumbrian Water by Lyonnaise des Eaux.

But the reality is that the arrival of the French has had a positive impact on the water industry - witness the 15 per cent price cuts agreed as a condition of the Northumbrian takeover - and there is no reason why they should not be of benefit to the rail industry. Lyonnaise and Generale are members of a French breed that appear to have no UK equivalent - large utility companies specialising in public works and construction projects.

There is no British company of equivalent size and capitalisation to these two giants, with the resources to invest on a comparable scale in public works projects and services. Generale employs 215,000 people and has turnover of £1.8bn, of which nearly a third is outside France.

Given the capital resources of the group, it is likely to be at least as good an owner of a railway franchise as the management buyout teams that are currently over-represented among the bidders for the business on offer. The French deserve to be encouraged - but only up to a point. There is a long way to go before French service industries are as open to outsiders as Britain's railways are now.

Media groups: Publishing and leisure company reveals unexpected losses at its US CD-Rom publisher □ Rival looks to global on-screen expansion

Pearson remains takeover target after mixed results

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Pearson, the media, publishing and leisure company, yesterday failed to shed its reputation as a potential takeover target, unveiling mixed results from its range of publishing, entertainment and television assets.

Despite posting pre-tax profits up 23 per cent to £365.1m in 1995, the company, publishers of the *Financial Times* and a leading television programmer, detailed unexpected losses at its US CD-Rom publisher, Mindscape. It also had to rely on an extraordinary profit of £131m from its sale last year of a stake in BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster, to shield a 5 per cent drop in its underlying performance.

The shares rose 7p on the day, to close at 664p. Henderson Crosthwaite reiterated yesterday its breakup estimate of £9 a share.

Analysts were of mixed view on the results. Neil Blackley, at Goldman Sachs, said: "I like the company. It's got some tremendous brands and you can see those shining through."

But other analysts were concerned about the losses of £6.9m

at Mindscape, the US publisher of games and "infotainment" titles on CD-Rom, cartridges and floppy discs, bought for £312m nearly two years ago.

Last December, the company warned analysts that operating profits would be down year on year in 1995, although no mention was made of Mindscape.

"Clearly, the results at Mindscape are unacceptable," Frank Barlow, chief executive, said. The company has hired the consultants McKinsey to undertake a review of the operations and recently announced the appointment of John Moore, formerly head of Penguin US, as chief executive.

The losses were linked in part to a high rate of return in the new year of product shipped in December for the all-important Christmas season.

"What we must do now is a detailed market study to decide where we should concentrate," Mr Barlow said.

The company's television operations, which include Thames Television and Grundy Worldwide, the independent producers, both performed strongly. Despite criticism last year of the £175m paid for Grundy, Greg

Dyke, chief executive of Pearson Television, told analysts that the acquisition had been a great success.

Westminster Press, the company's regional publishing arm, was also a bright spot, helped by a cost-cutting programme. Lazard Brothers, the investment bank, also turned in a superior performance, and stands to do even better this year once it takes in fees due on its work for Granada on the £3.5bn Fort bid.

Mr Barlow said that future acquisitions were likely to come in the television and media sectors, where management attention has been concentrated in recent years.

A recent restructuring has led to firmer lines of management control and the appointment to the main board of key executives, including Mr Dyke from Pearson Television and John Makinson, formerly managing director of the *Financial Times*, who replaces James Joll as group financing director on 1 April.

Mr Barlow dismissed reports, first published in the *Independent*, that Granada had contemplated a break-up bid for Pearson last year.



Media blues: Frank Barlow, chief executive of Pearson, described the results at Mindscape as "unacceptable", adding: "What we must do now is a detailed market study to decide where we should concentrate"

Granada plans to focus on TV ventures

Granada, the media and leisure company, is to rebrand its television arm and seek international partners to expand in Asia, America and on the Continent, writes Matthew Horsman.

A potential partner worldwide is Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster, with which Granada has already set up a joint venture to launch five new satellite channels in the UK.

The renewed emphasis on broadcasting follows the £3.5bn acquisition earlier this year of Fort, the hotels and restaurants company, which has consumed management attention since last autumn.

The company is currently looking at several possible names for the new television subsidiary, including Granada Broadcasting System (GBS).

A new chief executive of the television arm is expected to be named within weeks. A shortlist of two candidates is currently being reviewed internally, and it is expected that Duncan Lewis, formally chief executive of Mercury Communications, the telephone company, will be named to the position.

Granada, which operates ITV licences Granada and LWT, also holds 25 per cent of

Yorkshire-Tyne Tees, the ITV franchise holder, and is a large supplier of programming for the ITV network. It earned profits of £140m last year from its television operations.

Charles Allen, chief executive-designate of the company, said in an exclusive interview that "television is clearly a priority for us now. It's inherently a good business and highly cash-generative".

He added that the joint venture with BSkyB was a natural route for expansion. "They are Fort, the hotels and restaurants company, which has consumed management attention since last autumn."

Expansion in Asia, the US and the Continent is likely to follow the model of the joint venture with BSkyB. "We are looking to have alliances in major markets," Mr Allen said. "We are currently preparing to tell our story to potential partners, to prove that we are a pretty girl after all."

Mr Allen said the move into pay-TV did not imply a disavowal of the core commercial TV market. "These are two separate markets, and we believe they should be considered separately," he said.

"Only commercial television can deliver mass audiences, while cable and satellite can address narrow markets."

GEC confirms Simpson job

RUSSELL HOTTEN

GEC yesterday ended months of speculation by announcing that George Simpson, the Lucas chief executive, would replace Lord Weinstock, who has ruled the defence and electronics giant for 33 years.

Lord Weinstock, 71, will stay on as honorary chairman, an appointment that was greeted with a mixed response from analysts who fear he may be tempted to interfere.

But Mr Simpson, 53, whose Lucas contract does not expire until March 1997, is thought to have secured assurances from the GEC board about his right to manage.

Lord Weinstock's role will be a non-board post, though the company said GEC would "have available the benefit of his long experience and profound knowledge of the company."

In a short statement GEC said that Mr Simpson would join



Staying: Lord Weinstock will be honorary chairman

"as soon as he is free to take up the appointment", giving Lucas time to find a replacement to ensure an orderly transition.

Speculation about Mr Simpson's future has been a cloud over Lucas's shares and is likely to remain so until uncertainty about his successor is clarified, analysts believe. It is possible

that GEC may have to buy out the remainder of Mr Simpson's Lucas contract.

GEC has consistently underperformed the market in recent years, and investors have long wanted a new managing director to re-energise the diverse group. One GEC insider said: "There has been a lot of marking time around here while we wait for things to change at the top."

Although Mr Simpson has been the frontrunner to succeed Lord Weinstock, his appointment is not without its critics who consider that he may find the transition from the motor industry difficult. However, an analyst said yesterday: "George Simpson is a very good industrialist and a good strategic thinker. And what GEC needs now is a new strategy."

Mr Simpson joined Lucas two years ago from British Aerospace, where he was deputy chairman and ran the

Rover group before it was sold to Germany's BMW. Evidence of the improvements being made at Lucas should be revealed in today's interim results.

Some analysts believe that Mr Simpson's inside knowledge of BAE, a long-rumoured GEC bid target, was a key to his appointment. GEC favours forging a national "champion" defence group with BAE to compete with the giant US organisations. However, BAE has been at the forefront in pursuing cross-border mergers as part of the consolidation in the European defence industry.

Mike Styles, analyst at Credit Lyonnais Laing, saw Lord Weinstock's role as useful for Mr Simpson, as there are few people that truly understand the whole company. "It is reassuring for the market that Lord Weinstock and his contacts will remain," he said. GEC shares were down 5p to 359.5p, while Lucas fell 4.5p to 192p.

IN BRIEF

• Japan's trade surplus shrank for the eighth month running in February due to strong growth in imports. The surplus fell to \$6.13bn compared with \$11.31bn a year earlier. The bilateral deficit with the US fell 30 per cent to \$3.4bn during the same period. Imports have been rising for more than two and a half years, as Japanese firms have increasingly switched to supplying the domestic market from lower-cost plants in South East Asia. In the past 12 months, for example, the value of semiconductor imports has risen 68.8 per cent and office equipment by 59.2 per cent.

• Argos, the catalogue retailer with a £231m cash pile, is rewarding shareholders with a special dividend of 42p per share, equivalent to £127m. This is in addition to the 13p ordinary dividend which has been increased by almost 30 per cent on the previous year. Argos chief executive Mike Smith announced the plans along with impressive results for last year, which saw profits increase by 24 per cent to £124m. The company is looking at opening branches of Argos in the Netherlands. It is considering acquisitions though refused to comment on whether it might buy H Samuel, the jewellery chain being sold by Signet.

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• Ian Lang, Trade and Industry Secretary, agreed to a two-week extension of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission deadline to 4 April for reporting on two proposed acquisitions in the electricity industry: PowerGen's for Midlands Electricity and National Power's for Southern Electric.

• Eastern Track Renewals has been sold to a management buy-out team - Fastlane Rail Services - backed by Apex Partners and Hambros Bank. The York-based business is one of the main track renewal contractors to Railtrack, and also specialises in on-track machine repair and overhaul. John Watts, minister for railways and roads, said: "This sale demonstrates again that the railway industry is prepared to invest in its own future."

• Zemea plans to sell its US-based DNA identification laboratory, Cellmark Diagnostics, to LifeCodes Corp for an undisclosed amount. Cellmark is the largest non-governmental forensic DNA testing laboratory in the US and the only one with accreditation from the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors.

• Helene, the clothing manufacturer, has received an approach from a management team led by Robert Godfrey, a director of Helene, which may lead to the purchase of two subsidiaries - Just Jamie and Paulrich and Reggie & Co. The purchase is expected to be in excess of £20m.

• Qantas and British Airways will integrate their operations in Bangkok and Singapore. Qantas said that the new arrangements involve joint offices in both cities, as well as merged sales teams and operations. A spokesman said: "While maintaining our individual brands and identities, we believe our partnership has created the strongest on-orens airline presence in the region and will provide coordinated services and better value for our customers."

• Club Mediterranée said last year's protests over French nuclear tests cost the company around £4m in lost revenue. However, the company said it was getting back in a "normal situation."

SkyePharma in Swiss coup

MAGNUS GRIMOND

SkyePharma, the fledgling pharmaceutical group formerly known as Black & Edgington, is expected to more than quadruple its stock market value after buying Jago Holding, a Swiss drug research company, in a deal worth up to £305m. Jacques Gonella, owner of Jago, will be paid £105m in cash, £229m in shares and could pick up £167m over 10 years, under the earn-out terms of the purchase.

The acquisition comes just four months after the former marquee-hiring group reversed into Krypton, a Gibraltar-based pharmaceuticals company controlled by the chairman, Ian

Gowrie-Smith, in a £37m deal. The shares, quoted on the Alternative Investment Market, were suspended at 9p yesterday.

Over the next 10 days, SBC Warburg is leading a "book-building" placing and open offer to raise £135m from investors at home and overseas to finance the initial cash payment for Jago plus working capital. Existing holders can subscribe at the rate of between 105 and 125 shares for every 100 held after a one for 10 capital consolidation. The final price will depend on demand, but is expected to be in the range of 84p to 100p a share. It is hoped that the shares will be relisted on the main market in April.

The Jago deal is being presented as a refutation of SkyePharma. Mr Gowrie-Smith, who was the moving force behind the relaunch of Medeva as a generics-led drugs company, said yesterday: "It's been a long time in the coming, but my ambition is to create another pharmaceuticals company - and I couldn't wish for more than bringing together Jago and SkyePharma."

Founded in 1983 by Mr Gonella, Jago claims a list of blue chip pharmaceutical companies for its drug delivery technologies, including Eli Lilly, Procter & Gamble and SmithKline Beecham. The main one is Geomatrix, which

controls the release of drugs in tablet form, obviating the need to take several doses in a day or increasing the ability of an active ingredient to target a particular part of the body. By combining the technology with existing drugs, Mr Gowrie-Smith believes this could extend the protected life of pharmaceuticals coming off patent over the next six years. The market for these so-called generics is expected to rise from \$4.3bn to \$14.5bn over that period.

The company already has three Geomatrix-linked products on the market in the cardiovascular (high blood pressure) and anti-inflammatory therapeutic areas.

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

Hammerson gets into shape

First the bad news. Hammerson's share price is 23 per cent lower than two years ago and less than half the level at which it entered the 1990s. The property company's net assets, which ended 1992 at 384p per share, finished last year at 370p. The dividend, cut in half in 1992, nudged up yesterday but by a less than breathtaking 6.5 per cent.

The good news, however, is that the owner of the Brent Cross shopping centre looks in better shape now than at any point since Ron Spinney took over a hopelessly overextended, unfocused world-wide property investor in May 1993. Since then he has cleared out the dross, reduced debt and focused on a handful of markets where Hammerson sees growth.

That good news was just beginning to become evident in full-year figures reported yesterday, which showed a modest 5 per cent rise in rental income translated into a 22 per cent underlying rise in operating profits from £52.7m to £64.3m, a most meaningful figure when the reported number in our table includes lumpy disposal profits.

Hammerson is now roughly in the shape Mr Spinney always envisaged. About half the assets are in the UK, with a quarter each in Europe and North America. By asset class, the split is about 60/40 in favour of retail over offices.

That balance makes sense with Hammerson's portfolio revealing a wealth of growth potential from the shop assets compared with probably years of stagnation from offices. The retail assets are currently being rented at about 7 per cent below market rates, suggesting good growth. Offices, by contrast, are on average pulling in 30 per cent more than Hammerson could achieve with replacement tenants. Fortunately, most leases still have a long stretch to run, so the income is safe.

In an era of subdued inflation, the challenge for property companies is to generate extra value for shareholders by reading cycles better than their peers, trading properties cleverly, buying the right stock and managing assets astutely.

Most property companies, grown complacent on years of rising prices, do not have a clue how to do those things. Hammerson does, as it has clearly shown with its shrewd purchase and development of 99 Bishopsgate, a bombed-out office block in the City on which the company has already made a handsome turn. With luck it will do the same with its most recent purchase, Birmingham's ugly Bull Ring centre.

Mr Spinney has laid a good set of

foundations. All he needs now is for the green shoots of the property recovery to take hold. In the meantime, a 17 per cent discount to forecast net assets of 400p, at yesterday's share price of 342p, provides a solid floor.

Bunzl's double act well received

When Anthony Haggood and David Williams took control at Bunzl in 1991, the rival paper groups Bowater (now Rexam) and Arjo Wiggins Appleton were sneezing and Bunzl was on the floor after a 1980s spending spree. After nearly five years of treatment by the duo, the roles have been reversed. Both the big groups are now suffering at the hands of the paper cycle, while Bunzl's distribution businesses have ridden out recent wild fluctuations in pulp (and plastics) prices.

Yesterday, the group announced pre-tax profits up a third to £106m, right at the top of expectations, and was rewarded with an 8p rise in the share price to 209p.

The medicine administered by

Messrs Haggood and Williams has been to dump around a third of the business and concentrate on four areas, ranging from paper and plastic plates and the like to protective plastic caps for engineering parts, where it has leading positions. As a result, the group has seen net margins rise from 4.3 per cent in 1992 to 6.1 per cent last year, when return on capital topped a highly respectable 20 per cent, even after taking account of goodwill on acquisitions.

The problem for management now is how to maintain the momentum of growth. Profits have risen at a faster rate than sales since 1992, showing compound growth of 25 per cent over that period, some eight points ahead of the expansion in the top line. But fatter margins will be harder to come by from here on. The building supplies business, the last of the remaining serious underperformers, went in mid-1994.

Mr Haggood is confident that growth can continue and points to new business won in the key US market so far this year. Contracts with Supervalu, a grocery distributor, will alone be worth in excess of \$400m over four years. But to get things going, Bunzl may need to use its minimal 11 per cent gearing to buy something bigger than

the £3.7m of bolt-on acquisitions announced yesterday.

Despite a lowly forward rating of 12, based on profits of £116m this year, the shares may mark time until there are signs of further action. Hold.

Argos sidesteps high street woes

Few retailers had a better 1995 than Argos. As the catalogue retailer sidestepped the high street woes of many rivals, the shares rose by around 80 per cent and finished the year by soaring into the FT-SE 100.

Yesterday's figures showed why. Profits were 24 per cent higher at £124m on sales up 14 per cent to £1.4bn. This was in spite of higher costs caused by an extended print run of the company's catalogue and rising paper prices which made them more expensive to produce.

Argos's secret has been its low price, no frills operation, which has caught the mood of the budget-conscious 1990s. It also has plenty of scope for expansion.

The company now has 367 stores including 56 superstores. Another 31 will open this year. Argos Call and Collect stores which carries no stock but guarantees delivery within 24 hours is proving successful in its three store trial. The trial of First Stop, which concentrates on lower priced consumer durables is to be tested in another location before roll out. Like-for-like sales also look promising. They rose by 7.7 per cent last year while the margin edged ahead from 7.3 per cent to 7.4 per cent. The trend has continued into the current year with like-for-like sales up 8 per cent.

The high question hanging over the shares was what management might do with the company's £231m cash pile. After the failure with the Chesterman furniture deal, an acquisition would have been frowned upon by the City. The £127m special dividend is a safe option, though it will hit profits due to lower interest receivable next year.

Analysts have downgraded accordingly and BZW now expects profits of £133.5m this year. With the shares down 2.5p to 638p yesterday that puts them on a steady forward rating of 22. After last year's spectacular run, they now look fully valued.

John Willcock CITY DIARY

Carling finds a whole new ball game in the NHS

Now that Will Carling is no longer captain of the England rugby team he can concentrate even harder on his commercial activities. How fitting that, having been carried off the Ireland game on Saturday with torn ligaments, our Will should this Wednesday be launching a health-care appointments company.

Match Healthcare Services has been formed to place specialist medical and nursing staff within NHS trusts. A press hand-out declares: "The Eve Club on London's Regent Street, made famous by the affairs of the Hon Mr John Profumo and Miss Christine Keeler, will again play host to an affair of a different sort."

"This time the star player is Will Carling, but on a considerably less scandalous venture!" Nudge, nudge, as they say. Lets hope some paramedics are on hand if he falls over again.

On the same day Will's former team-mate Rob Andrew will be trying to beat the longest world place-kick record as part of the 1996 Property Awards. Property agents are obviously a rugby mad lot - Rob Andrew used to be one - and the London Docklands Development Corporation took advantage of this last weekend.

The LDDC was attending the MIPIM property conference in Cannes, and won wide acclaim from the British contingent by setting up a huge screen in a marquee on the beach to show the England-Ireland match live. Locals were startled, ac-

Simon Jefferys, employment partner at City solicitors McKenna & Co, rubs his hands with glee relating the story of a client who had a problem with an employee who was "grossly abusing his sick leave". The client knew what was happening, but couldn't prove anything. Until, that is, the employee appeared on the front of an angling magazine proudly displaying an enormous carp. The photo caption revealed that the date this monster was landed happened to be one of the dates when said employee had "thrown a sickie". He must have been gutted.



Carried off: Will Carling's commercial activities now include a health-care appointments company

According to our man on the spot, by the sudden blast of the national anthem being belted out by 200-odd property agents.

Argos, the catalogue retail company, leapt onto the information super highway nine months ago when it introduced shopping via the Internet. And the fruits of this Cybershopping so far? Since launch, 22 items sold.

The Methodist Church has just received an astonishing windfall of £92m from the sale of a plot of land in central Hong Kong. To be more accurate, the Council for World Mission, a small Westminster-based charity with historic links to the Methodist Church, has suddenly found itself bigger than the British Red Cross. According to the Methodist

Recorder, the land was bought from the Crown by the London Missionary Society in 1887, and two hospitals were built on it. Nineteen years ago the CWM took over the hospitals, and three years ago it moved them elsewhere and sold the site for £135m. With just 15 staff and 62 mission partners worldwide, the CWM now finds itself, in investment income terms, nearly as big as the National Trust.

Mike Blackburn, chief executive of Halifax, is as fickle as the rest of us when it comes to management gurus. Four years ago Blackburn was smitten by the then fashionable Tom Peters. After one session he commented: "It's a bit like an evangelical meeting... What did impress me was his stress on empowering people." Now Halifax are lead sponsors of a two-day masterclass by "management expert" Gary Hamel.

Blackburn described this as a "very special event. Gary Hamel's work has been enormously influential... his views have influenced our approach to the analysis of our business."

IN BRIEF

• **TT Group's** full-year figures were welcomed in the City yesterday, with analysts nudging up their forecasts for the diversified industrial group. After a 20 per cent jump in pre-tax profits for the year to December to £44.9m, current year forecasts were being moved up to between £52m and £53m. The company said demand for its products, which range from resistors to circuit board assemblies and suspended ceilings, had remained strong throughout the year with electronic components showing the strongest growth. Earnings per share rose 20 per cent to 19.5p while the dividend increased by a similar margin to 6.52p.

• **Takare**, the nursing home group, warned yesterday that industry occupancy levels would not match those of last year. It said problems largely related to temporary local authority funding difficulties and this would be seen as a short-term dip in the group's traditionally high occupancy levels. The group added 1,050 beds in 1995, taking the total to 7,620, but said newly commissioned homes were taking longer to fill. Pre-tax profits inched ahead from £21.1m to £21.8m last year, hit by the decision to depreciate buildings. The dividend rises 13 per cent to 2.6p after a final of 1.7p.

COMPANY RESULTS				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Argos (F)	1,440m (1,285m)	124m (100m)	27.5p (22.3p)	13.0p (10.5p)
Astec (F)	372m (313m)	26.1m (21.0m)	7.33p (5.86p)	1.50p (1.2p)
Bund (F)	1,760m (1,620m)	105m (93.6m)	18.5p (17p)	5.5p (5p)
Glynwed Ind (F)	1,250m (1,020m)	84.2m (67.1m)	25.70p (21.34p)	12.75p (12.25p)
Hammerson (F)	1,260m (1,200m)	57.7m (105m)	13p (14.3p)	10.65p (10p)
Managance Brown (F)	48.0m (41.1m)	2.5m (2.0m)	10.11p (7.25p)	2.5p (2p)
Maybarn Sp (F)	49.7m (43.0m)	5.6m (4.9m)	18.5p (16.1p)	7.2p (6.4p)
Pearson (F)	1,830m (1,550m)	365m (250m)	47.1p (40.4p)	16.5p (15p)
Polypipe (F)	94.2m (94.7m)	9.67m (9.31m)	4.06p (3.89p)	0.23p (0.21p)
Royal Doulton (F)	243m (228m)	15.2m (12.6m)	17.3p (15.4p)	8.5p (7.5p)
Takare (F)	1,100m (90.0m)	21.8m (21.1m)	14.3p (14.5p)	2.6p (2.5p)
TT Group (F)	470m (397m)	44.5m (35.6m)	19.5p (16.2p)	6.32p (5.45p)
Vitac (F)	132m (97.1m)	20.7m (16.1m)	52.3p (40.2p)	10.5p (9p)
Wilson Bowden (F)	238m (240m)	29.6m (37.1m)	21.1p (27.1p)	10.05p (10.05p)

(F) - Final (F) - Interim (M) - 12 months

Glynwed pipes up 25% rise in profit

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Glynwed, the Aga cookers to pipes business, surprised the City with a 25.5 per cent profit rise despite worries about the slowdown in the UK's rate of economic recovery.

Analysts edged up their forecasts for this year as the company reported profits of £84.2m and trading improvements in most key operations. Zafar Khan at Societe Generale Strauss Turnbull raised his forecast for this year by £4m to £102m.

About 66 per cent of Glynwed's market is in the UK, but the company said that continued growth in exports, up 35 per

cent last year, would cushion it until the expected economic upturn at the end of 1996.

Bruce Ralph, Glynwed's chief executive, said the pipe business had benefited from higher spending by the water companies. The metals businesses were also doing well, with volumes running at the same level as last year, despite fears of a slowdown in industrial output. "Overall, group order intake is running at the same level as the last quarter of 1995," he said.

The group would be looking to make some non-core disposals in the construction materials division, while further bolt-on deals were also possible.

Metals reported record profits of £16.8m (£11.3m), while plastics' profits rose from £19.9m to £26.3m thanks to acquisitions. A good start to the year in the consumer products division, which makes cookers, could not be sustained because of high raw material prices and profits slipped from £14m to £12.1m.

Disposals had helped minimise the company's exposure to the UK economic cycle. The £147.3m acquisition of Vitac last August would also have a significant impact on reducing cyclical swings. The Vitac purchase helped raise gearing to 40.9 per cent at end-

December, but Mr Ralph said he was comfortable with the debt level and expected this to fall to around 25 per cent by the end of 1996.

Vitac's integration into Glynwed was progressing well. It had strengthened the company's position as a world leader in water, gas, and related pipework systems.

The results include a four-month contribution from Vitac, which made an operating profit of £4.6m, before reorganisation costs of £1m. Group operating profits rose 25 per cent to £93m. The final dividend is 8.35p, lifting the total payout from 12.25p to 12.75p.

Weekend breaks with THE INDEPENDENT

We would like to invite you to take a weekend break and stay two nights for the price of one. In conjunction with Queens Moat Houses Hotels, our offer allows you to pay for one night's bed and breakfast and get the next night, including breakfast, free. Rates are based on two adults sharing a twin or double room and the only stipulation is that your weekend break must include a Saturday.

You can choose from 82 hotels located throughout the UK, ranging from country houses and cosy inns, to modern hotels in the heart of city centres. All are three or four star properties and many will allow you to enjoy a longer stay on the same basis, pay for two nights and stay for four, for example. You can check this when making your booking.

To add to our offer, children under sixteen can stay free when sharing a room with two adults, plus children under six can breakfast free. For those of you who are feeling energetic, many of the hotels offer a Body Club or Club Moatvation Health and Fitness Centre which you are free to use.

Pictured here is Stifford Moat House near Grays in Essex. Set in six acres of landscaped gardens, which the hotel's elegant Regency restaurant overlooks, it offers a truly peaceful setting. A double room for two people for two nights costs just £60



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The offer is valid until 5 May 1996. Some hotels will extend the offer until 26 May 1996, please check when making your booking.
2. This offer is only valid based upon two people sharing a twin/double bedroom for a minimum of two consecutive nights accommodation including full national breakfast.
3. All reservations are subject to availability and allocation of suitable bedrooms being available.
4. Children under six years of age when sharing a room with two adults will stay and eat free.

5. Children aged six to fifteen years when sharing a room with two adults will stay free and be charged £4 for national breakfast per child per day.
6. Children accommodated in their own room will be charged the same independent rate as adults. No further discounts are applicable.
7. Full payment, including extras, is to be settled prior to departure from your selected hotel.
8. The offer is only valid when you book through

9. Cancellations are to be notified to QUEENS-LINE UK Reservations as soon as possible and are accepted up to 4 pm on the proposed day of arrival.
10. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer, or promotion and is not valid

- for special events, theatre breaks, half board arrangements, luxury weekends or week-long programmes.
11. Offers only apply if the hotel is managed by a company in the Queens Moat Houses Group at the time a reservation is made.
12. Photocopies of tokens and the vouchers are unacceptable.
13. The weekend break prizes are each worth up to a maximum of £384 and must be taken before 31 August 1996, subject to availability.

HOW TO QUALIFY
To qualify for your 2 for 1 weekend break, you must collect four differently numbered tokens from the seven we are printing until Saturday 23 March. You will need to attach them to a voucher which we will print in tomorrow's Independent. Today we are printing Token 3, tomorrow we will print Token 4.

HOW TO BOOK
For a Town & Country Classic Weekend Break brochure call 0541 543 500 quoting "Independent Offer". Once you have chosen your hotel call QUEENS-LINE UK Reservations on 0645 113311, quoting "Independent Offer". Your confirmation will then be sent out within 48 hours. Please remember to take your voucher and four differently numbered tokens to your hotel, they must be presented on arrival.

£7,000 OF WEEKEND BREAKS TO BE WON
Today we are giving away four weekend breaks. Each prize entitles two people to a two night bed and breakfast weekend break at the hotel of their choice. For a chance to win one of our prizes, simply call the following number: 0891 252 999. You will be asked to answer one simple question and leave your name, address and telephone number. Calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times. Four winners will be picked at random from all correct entrants after lines close at midnight tonight. Normal Newspaper Publishing rules apply. The Editor's decision is final.

Weekend breaks

TOKEN 3

THE INDEPENDENT

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business

Where else might one pick up capacity constraints? General pressure on the infrastructure is an obvious area, but our newest infrastructure – telecommunications – has vast overcapacity

So you end up with a rather unsatisfactory conclusion: that there is no evidence that the natural rate of growth of our service-oriented economy has risen, but also no evidence of overheating. Policy conclusion? Press on until there are clear signs of strain, but be ever-ready to jack up interest rates to slow things down, if signs go to amber. Trouble is, they will do the first, but not the second. Or that is what Eddie George doubtless fears.

London Metal Exchange

Volume	LME Stocks	chg
128371	717650	+ 170
2567	703650	+ 170
83426	339575	+ 4035
78497	89725	- 8025
9549	36536	- 258
4812	9545	- 265
16220	626825	- 2725

5/4 Stock volumes & change in volume
as at Friday 16 March

Spreck & Son			
S	C	S	C
40	268	Kruglands	365/58
206	125	50/56	252/60
10	50	Nobles	401/15
52	34	Maple Leaf	356/40

CMS

Potatoes	Potatoes
LCE	ATA
Channe	Dio/10g

0	Apr	162.20	Apr	28.0	
5	May	169.00	May	29.5	
0	Jun	226.00	Jun	31.0	
8	Vol:	183	Vol:	611	
	Wheat		Corn		1530 Price
1	LC	117.90	CBOT	Cent. bushels	
9	May	119.85	May	37.75-38.00	39.15
0	Jun	122.00	Jun	38.50-39.00	39.00
2	Vol:	377	Jul	37.50-37.75	37.00
	May/Jul	Soya CB\$	FL/100 kg		92.0

Mar/Apr	Coconut Oil (t) S/tonne	7250
Apr	Sunflower Oil S/tonne	6700
Mar	Rapeseed Oil S/FL/100kg	865
Apr/May	Groundnut Oil S/tonne	9050

Markets **N Europe Bourse FT Information Reuters

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market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100

3669.6+24.8

FT-SE 250

4244.5+17.3

FT-SE 350

1844.2+11.4

SEAQ VOLUME

576.1m shares,

31,132 bargains

Gifts Index

92.22 -0.09

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

share price, pence

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Unitech turns out to be the winner in takeover bets

TAKING STOCK

Shares of Unitech, the electronic components group, soared 173p to 688p as the stock market awaited the signal takeover bid from Siebe.

The surge means that half of one of the market's favourite bets has turned out to be a winner. Unfortunately most speculators had ignored Unitech, opting for the other half of the two-way bet, Eurodisc Electron.

It all started when Elektrowatt, the Swiss group controlled by the Credit Suisse bank, acquired Landis & Gyr, an electronics group. To help meet the £1bn outlay the Swiss decided to sell peripheral investments, including 29.4 per cent of Unitech and 42 per cent of Eurodisc, an electronic components company they helped put together last summer.

Much of the speculation swirled around Eurodisc, which seemed to be the more likely takeover target.

In the event, Unitech, which missed the speculative whirl, has become the bid target while Eurodisc still awaits a suitor. The activity was enough to lift Eurodisc 11p to 295p. It has been as high as 312p with the market talking of a bid in the region of 360p.

Unitech is likely to fall to Siebe, the engineer. Late on Friday it disclosed it had picked up 25 per cent and had options on the rest of the Swiss stake. Unitech, which controls Nemic Lambda, a Japanese power supply group, is thought to want any bid to include a cash alternative.

Some, such as Societe Generale Strauss Turnbill, expect any bid to be worth 750p; others hover around 650p. Siebe lost 18p to 826p.

The rest of the market moved ahead although trading was rather lacklustre. The FT-SE 100 index jumped 24.8



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

points to 3,669.6 with continuing takeover speculation and a firm New York opening the main influences. Dividend payments, representing 11.8 points, masked the strength of the advance.

Cable and Wireless, reflecting the potential BT interest, gained 9.5p to 485p. BT rose 4p to 351.5p. A Cable take-out price is the subject of intense debate. The group's overseas interests, including its controlling stake in Hongkong Telecom, cloud the issue. Lehman, the US securities house, puts the bid price between 570p and 670p.

Insurance shares were firm, largely on the back of Credit

Lyonnais Laing support. Banks continued to recover from last week's mauling prompted by the lending war. GEC fell 5p to 359.5p as it denied reports of a £5n deal with United Arab Emirates. It did confirm that Lucas Industries' chief executive, George Simpson, would succeed Lord Westcott as managing director. Lucas, little changed at 192p, is now seen as vulnerable to a bid.

National Power and PowerGen, somewhat surprisingly, greeted a delay in the monopolies examination of their proposed moves into the regional electricity industry by moving ahead. NP rose 9.5p to 471p

and PG 11.5p to 513p.

Allied Domecq, the retailing and spirits group, rebounded 10.5p to 491p after Friday's sell-off. Takeover hopes were said to be responsible for the recovery. United Biscuits, another group where a bid is seen as a possible solution to its problems, firmed 4p to 246p.

Zeneca, another takeover favourite, ended 8p lower at 1,375p after stripping out a near 25p dividend. Elsewhere on the drugs front, Stanfords gained 30p to 510p ahead of figures and Skye-Pharma was duly suspended at 9p to accommodate a major acquisition.

BAT Industries had a volatile session, despite a "clear air" over its legal problems in the US. The shares ended 13p lower at 488p after hitting 482p. They were tormented by a sharp fall in the shares of Philip Morris, the US group unsettled by

one of its executives giving evidence to the Food and Drug Administration.

NFC, the old National Freight Corporation, which has had a torrid time in recent years as a succession of profit warnings have devastated the shares, moved ahead 3p to 155p with NatWest Securities making positive noises. The shares, it said, could "be about to turn".

The day's profit warning was contributed by Rainford, an electrical equipment group, which slumped 92p to 382p.

A warning that write-downs could result in an \$87m loss hit XCL, the oil exploration group, 3p to 16p. The shares were 102p in October.

Figures helped some shares higher. Pearson put on 7p to 664p; Doeffler, the chemical group, 20p to 238p and TI, a mini conglomerate, 18p to 311p.

Alexon, the fashion group which has suffered three years of losses, should be back in the black when it reports next week. Up to £2m profit is expected against a £3.7m loss last time. Forecasts for the current year are around £4m. The shares rose 4p to 91p.

Dana Petroleum improved 0.5p to 8.5p, reflecting the clearing of a big stock overhang. The company operates in the former Soviet Union and Henderson Crosthwaite calculates growth potential could take asset value to 26p.

Radio First, traded on OTC, has acquired the Mel-low 1557 radio station, based at Colchester. It paid £225,000 in cash and shares. Further deals are expected. The shares arrived at 45p in October; they closed at 65p.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: Ex-Rights = Ex-dividend on Ex-Rights; Unlisted = Unlisted Securities Market; Suspended = Suspended; Party Paid = Party Paid; NI Paid = NI Paid.

The Independent Index

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FT-SE 100 - Real-time	00	Starting Rates	04	Privatisation Issues	36
UK Stock Market Report	01	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	37
UK Company News	02	Wall St Report	06	Electricity Shares	40
Foreign Exchange	03	Tokyo Market	07	High Street Banks	41

Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline 071 873 4375 (9.30am - 5.30pm).

Calls cost 30p per minute (cheap rate), and stop at all other times. Call charges include

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume
BT	30,000	Shell	20,000	BT	50,000
BT	20,000	Shell	10,000	BT	30,000
BT	10,000	Shell	5,000	BT	15,000
BT	5,000	Shell	2,500	BT	7,500
BT	2,500	Shell	1,250	BT	3,750

FT-SE 100 index hour by hour

Open 3647.9 up 3.0	11.00 3652.5 up 7.7	14.00 3654.7 up 12.9
09.00 3649.8 up 3.0	12.00 3652.5 up 7.7	15.00 3652.5 up 12.9
10.00 3650.0 up 3.2	13.00 3652.5 up 7.7	16.00 3652.5 up 12.9
	14.00 3652.5 up 7.7	17.00 3652.5 up 12.9

Telecommunications

BT 30,000 | BT | 20,000 | BT | 10,000 | BT | 5,000 | BT | 2,500 | BT | 1,250 | BT | 625 | BT | 312 | BT | 156 | BT | 78 | BT | 39 | BT | 19 | BT | 9 | BT | 4 | BT | 2 | BT | 1 | BT | 0.5 | BT | 0.25 | BT | 0.125 | BT | 0.0625 | BT | 0.03125 | BT | 0.015625 | BT | 0.0078125 | BT | 0.00390625 | BT | 0.001953125 | BT | 0.0009765625 | BT | 0.00048828125 | BT | 0.000244140625 | BT | 0.0001220703125 | BT | 0.00006103515625 | BT | 0.000030517578125 | BT | 0.0000152587890625 | BT | 0.00000762939453125 | BT | 0.000003814697265625 | BT | 0.0000019073486328125 | BT | 0.00000095367431640625 | BT | 0.000000476837158203125 | BT | 0.0000002384185791015625 | BT | 0.00000011920928955078125 | BT | 0.000000059604644775390625 | BT | 0.0000000298023223876953125 | BT | 0.00000001490116119384765625 | BT | 0.000000007450580596923828125 | BT | 0.0000000037252902984619140625 | BT | 0.00000000186264514923095703125 | BT | 0.000000000931322574615478515625 | BT | 0.0000000004656612873077392578125 | BT | 0.00000000023283064365386962890625 | BT | 0.000000000116415321826934814453125 | BT | 0.0000000000582076609134674072265625 | BT | 0.00000000002910383045673370361328125 | BT | 0.000000000014551915228366851806640625 | BT | 0.0000000000072759576141834259033203125 | BT | 0.00000000000363797880709171295166015625 | BT | 0.000000000001818989403545856475830078125 | BT | 0.0000000000009094947017729282379150390625 | BT | 0.00000000000045474735088646141895751953125 | BT | 0.000000000000227373675443230709478759765625 | BT | 0.0000000000001136868377216153547393798828125 | BT | 0.00000000000005684341886080767736968994140625 | BT | 0.000000000000028421709430403838684844970703125 | BT | 0.0000000000000142108547152019193424224853515625 | BT | 0.000000000000007105427357600959671211244267578125 | BT | 0.0000000000000035527136788004798356056221337890625 | BT | 0.00000000000000177635683940023991780281106689453125 | BT | 0.000000000000000888178419700119958901405533447265625 | BT | 0.0000000000000004440892098500599794507027667236328125 | BT | 0.00000000000000022204460492502998972535138336181640625 | BT | 0.000000000000000111022302462514994862675691680908203125 | BT | 0.0000000000000000555111512312574974313378458404541015625 | BT | 0.00000000000000002775557561562874871566892292022705078125 | BT | 0.000000000000000013877787807814374357834461460113525390625 | BT | 0.0000000000000000069388939039071871789172307300567626953125 | BT | 0.00000000000000000346944695195359358945861536502838134765625 | BT | 0.000000000000000001734723475976796794729307682514190673828125 | BT | 0.0000000000000000008673617379883983473646538412557045369140625 | BT | 0.00000000000000000043368086899419917368232692062785226845703125 | BT | 0.000000000000000000216840434497099586841163460313926134228515625 | BT | 0.0000000000000000001084202172485497934205817301569630671142578125 | BT | 0.00000000000000000005421010862427489671029086507848153355712890625 | BT | 0.000000000000000000027105054312137448355145432539240766778564453125 | BT | 0.0000000000000000000135525271560687241775727162696203833892822265625 | BT | 0.00000000000000000000677626357803436208878635813481019169464111328125 | BT | 0.00000000000000000000338813178901718104439317906740509584732056640625 | BT | 0.000000000000000000001694065894508590522196589533702547923660283203125 | BT | 0.0000000000000000000008470329472542952610982947668512739618301416015625 | BT | 0.00000000000000000000042351647362714763054914738342563698091507080078125 | BT | 0.000000000000000000000211758236813573815274573691712818490457535400390625 | BT | 0.0000000000000000000001058791184067869076372868458564092452287677001953125 | BT | 0.00000000000000000000005293955920339345381861434229282047261438385009765625 | BT | 0.000000000000000000000026469779601696726909307171146410236307191925048828125 | BT | 0.0000000000000000000000132348898008483634546535855732051181535959625244140625 | BT | 0.00000000000000000000000661744490042418172732679278660255907679798126220703125 | BT | 0.000000000000000000000003308722450212090863663396393301279538398990631103515625 | BT | 0.0000000000000000000000016543612251060454318316981966506397691994953155567890625 | BT | 0.000000000000000000000000827180612553022715915849098325031984599747657777890625 | BT | 0.0000000000000000000000004135903062765113579579245491625159922799738288889453125 | BT | 0.00000000000000000000000020679515313825567897896227458125996113998691444447265625 | BT | 0.000000000000000000000000103397576569127839489481137290629980569993457222236328125 | BT | 0.00 |

RACING: The Flat season on turf starts on Thursday and swiftly builds towards the Classics. Here, the leading trainers tell Ian Davies of the horses from their stables which can reward their followers in the coming months

Flat advice to keep punters on the level

MICHAEL BELL
"Go With The Wind, who ran twice as a two-year-old, will go for an all-weather maiden soon for that third run which will entitle him to a handicap mark. He will be suited by a mile or more this season. Doctor Bravious has had three runs, landed an all-weather maiden over an extended mile at Wolverhampton in January and has been given a handicap mark of 70. I think that's lenient and he might be aimed for a handicap at Kempton's Easter meeting."

JACK BERRY
Mind Games, chosen for this list in 1994 and 1995, completes the hat-trick. "He'll go for all the 1000 Guineas and over five furlongs and may be bid for the Haydock Park Sprint Championship over six in September. However, his main target is the York novice over five furlongs at York in August. He won't be making an early start this year. The Temple Stakes at Sandown in May will probably be his first race. My Melody Parkes will be aimed at the 1,000 Guineas and will probably run in the Nell Gwyn Stakes over seven furlongs at the Craven meeting first. She's by the 1993 Derby winner, Teosno, and absolutely certain to stay a mile."

CLIVE BRITAIN
"Babinda won the Houghton Stakes at Newmarket last October. Has wintered very well and, a son of Old Vic, will be suited by a mile and upwards. Andover, who is by Caerleon, has been showing ability at home and will also be suited by a mile. He has plenty of speed."

NEVILLE CALLAGHAN
"Danehill Dancer, runner up to Althair in the Dewhurst, is well but has not done much fast work so far. If he pleases me,

he may go for the Greenham Stakes at Newbury - he would have to carry a penalty in Newmarket's Craven Stakes as he won two Group One races last year - and will then go for 2,000 Guineas. I'm hopeful he will stay a mile. I've known horses show form at seven furlongs as two-year-olds that have ended up being best. Six. Tarawa won the £35,000 Ladbrokes Autumn Handicap at Newmarket last back-end and a progressive four-year-old who may go on to better things this year. A mile suits him well."

HENRY CECIL
"Phantom Quest is a nice maiden three-year-old by Rainbow Quest who should win a race. Bright Water is a three-year-old by Caerleon who last October won a mile maiden at Yarmouth. Hopefully, he will make up into a Group-class performer at a mile and a half."

PETER CHAPPEL-HYAM
"Astor Place won a 23-runner seven furlongs maiden in good style at Newmarket and then ran well when beaten only around three lengths into fifth behind Loup Solitaire in the Grand Critérium over a mile at Longchamp. He will start off in the



Cecil: Bright Water shines

With the flat turf season commencing at Doncaster on Thursday and the Newmarket Craven meeting only four weeks away, trainers are starting to get serious with their strings and already have a fair idea what 1996 will hold for them. Some have reason to believe the next few months will bring classic success, others are hoping to land coups in handicaps. Game-plans are being drawn up and strategies devised.

Last March, Peter Chapple-Hyam was already in the position of being able to predict in his early success for the subsequent Craven Stakes winner Painter's Row, while David Loder was keen on the unraced juvenile Appland, who went on to win the Cherry Hinton Stakes. Not every horse will realise its potential but with patience, following a list of horses can be a fascinating alternative to form-book study - and can throw up big-price winners.

The horses listed here, which include unexposed handicappers, unraced maidens and possible winners of the 1,000 Guineas, 2,000 Guineas, Oaks, Derby and St Leger, give the punter something with which to go to war.

PAUL COLE
"Ryadiah has wintered very well and, if he comes up to scratch, the main target this year will be the King George at Ascot. He acts on any going and, although he ran well when two lengths second to Spectrum in the Champion Stakes over 10 furlongs, will race only at a mile and a half this year. Leonine, who ran a bit green when a short-head second in the six-furlong Convivial Stakes on his debut at the York August meeting, then returned to the same track a fortnight later to win a maiden over the same trip. He will be a fair milier and, if he starts his first race in the 1000 Guineas, will start him off in one of the lesser classic trials, maybe the one at Thirsk over the round mile, although if he really places in the next few weeks we might think about the Greenham."

LUCA CUMANI
"Hemourless, who is by Nashua out of a staying mare, had three runs last year but was rather backward. He was beaten about five lengths into fourth place in a 17-runner maiden over a mile at Leicester on his final start. Hopefully this year, as he matures and tackles longer distances, he should make a useful performer. Select Few, by Alzao, also had three runs last year and, on his last outing won a Goodwood maid-

en over a mile in good fashion. He will be suited by 10 furlongs. Both horses are likely to be ready to run in April."

JOHN DUNLOP
"Nwaznis had a lot of physical problems last year but hopefully he is over them. As he has won only one race, he is eligible for a lot of conditions races and I want to get a sweeter into him in a minor contest before thinking about a Group race and he may run in the Doncaster Mile on Thursday. Bint Salsabil, although she may turn out more of an Oaks filly, will be aimed at the 1,000 Guineas and, as she is a long-striding filly, I may take her to Newmarket to run in the Nell Gwyn over the straight seven rather than go to Newbury for the Fred Darling which is run round a bend."

JAMES FANSHAWE
"Judicial Supremacy is a two-year-old full brother - by Warning out of mare by The Minstrel - who will probably make his debut in a six furlong maiden in May. Nunschappa, a three-year-old half sister to Unhish by Sharpo, she finished unplaced in a six-furlong Newmarket maiden on her only start as a juvenile last October. She will be ready to run in mid-April, will start off over six or seven furlongs and might get a mile."

JOHN GOSDEN
"Lord Of Men, who won the Group One Prix de la Salamandre for me has wintered well. He will start off in either the Greenham or the Craven. He should stay 10 furlongs but I am not sure he would last the mile and a half of the Derby. There are fewer stamina doubts about Sacho [out to 16-1 from 30-1 by the Tote yesterday for the Derby] who is by Kris out of Oh So Sharp. He ran very promisingly on his only start, finishing second in the traditionally competitive Chesterton Maiden Stakes at Newmarket in October. He will be suited by 10 furlongs and a half, will run at the Craven meeting and is a fine prospect."

JOHN HILLS
"Al Abraq is a three-year-old by Reprimand who won on his debut and then was a creditable fifth to Rio Divida in the Tattersalls Houghton Stakes. I was going to run him in the Free Handicap at the Craven meeting, but he has had a minor setback and will now wait for a conditions race later on. He has wintered very well and might be good enough for something like the Jersey Stakes at Royal Ascot. Diminutive had three



Gosden: Sweet on Sacho

runs last year, finishing third on the last of them in a maiden at Leicester when he came back not quite right. He has been wintering in Pisa, getting a bit of sun, and is working well in a small field and will then go for handicaps at a mile to 10 furlongs. He's the sort who might have a crack at the Britania Handicap at Royal Ascot."

LYNDA RAMSDEN
The trainer's husband, the respected professional gambler Jack Ramsden, said: "Master Charter had slight seasonal problems last year but still managed to win over seven furlongs. He appeared not to get a mile subsequently, but is bred to get 10 furlongs and should stay a mile this year. He is entered for a six furlong handicap at Doncaster on Friday. Another ready to appear soon is Saund, who was picked up for 4,000 Guineas from Tom Jones last back-end. She is at the bottom of the handicap, stays well and will go for 14 furlongs-plus handicaps."

ALEC STEWART
"Dakka Dancer, who has strengthened over the winter, is by Cadeaux Genereux out of Lupe Stakes winner Lady Shipley. He was fifth in a maiden on the July course and then a close third in a 19-runner seven furlongs maiden at Yarmouth. He will run in mid-April and should make a fair milier/10 furlongs performer. Jannairah Sunset is an unraced three-year-old filly by Be My Guest who has had niggling problems. She has made up into a very attractive sort and I will be disappointed if she cannot win races. She has been making more than average progress in recent weeks. Likely to stay a mile, she may be ready to appear in mid-April."

Lo Stregone's odds as Grand National favourite are now as low as 6-1 after the announcement that Rough Quest will miss the race and the news that Jodami and Royal Athlete are also doubtful.

"Jodami's absence is not definite, but the National is only a week on Saturday and we're just running out of time," Peter Beaumont, Jodami's trainer, said.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Mandicoot (Ayr 2.10)
NB: Fresh Choice (Fontwell 3.30)

said. He added that his 11-year-old is more likely to run in the Irish National on 8 April, when Rough Quest is a possible rival.

Mark Pitman added last year's winner, Royal Athlete, to the doubtful list, saying: "We've been held up with him and it's odds against him running." Young Hustler, who won the likely Ayr weight on 11st 7lb, having Lo Stregone just 2lb out of the handicap proper.

RESULTS

LINGFIELD
2.10: 1. TARRON (D) 3-1; 2. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 3. Slightly Special 2-1; 4. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 5. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 6. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 7. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 8. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 9. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 10. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 11. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 12. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 13. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 14. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 15. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 16. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 17. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 18. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 19. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 20. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 21. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 22. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 23. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 24. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 25. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 26. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 27. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 28. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 29. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 30. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 31. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 32. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 33. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 34. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 35. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 36. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 37. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 38. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 39. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 40. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 41. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 42. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 43. Balthasar (D) 2-1; 44. 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The revelation of the season has been Ireland's Simon Mason, who kicked his goals with a lovely action and did not put a foot wrong

The party: Full-backs: P Hull, S Mason. Wings: M Corcoran, I Evans, K Logan, J Sleightholme. Centres: W Carling, L Davies, N Davies, J Guscott. Outside-halves: N Jenkins, G Townsend. Scrum-halves: R Howley, B Redpath. Props: J Davies, D Hilton. J Leonard, N Poppellwell. Hookers: G Dawe, G Jenkins. Locks: M Bayfield, M Johnson, D Jones, G Llewellyn. Flankers: L Dallaglio, G Jones, T Rodder, R Wainwright (capt). No 8: R. Bayly, D Richards.

Photograph: Peter Jay

The Welsh Rugby Union admits Gareth Llewellyn will almost certainly be a Harlequin next season despite its block on his transfer request. "It is no secret within the WRU that a number of people think this regulation is unsustainable," said Gwyn Walters, the chairman of the committee which turned Llewellyn's request down.

The most popular competition of its kind, now in its 58th year, brings together almost 4,500 boys from schools and colleges. The junior and preparatory schools tournaments start today with the Open tournament beginning tomorrow.

[illegible]

iam "The Fridge" Perry take on the Scottish Claymores. April 14th.

MONARCHS

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SPORT

Clark rejects England speculation

Football

Frank Clark believes almost every manager in the Premiership is in the frame for the England manager's job, but that has not stopped the bookmakers William Hill closing their book on who will succeed Terry Venables.

Their decision followed the Nottingham Forest manager's dismissal of reports that he is to work alongside Venables for Euro 96 before taking over.

"Clearly moves are afoot to approach certain potential managers and the Football Association must have a list of people they wish to sound out," Hill's spokesman, Graham Sharpe, said.

"We have no idea who they may be but would not be surprised if plenty of other people do, which would make it financial suicide for us to continue to bet."

Clark, whose team face Bayern Munich in the Uefa Cup tonight, had been heavily backed recently with his odds being cut from 10-1 to 4-1 third favourite. The Leeds manager, Howard Wilkinson, was the 7-4 favourite and Tottenham's Gerry Francis the next best at 2-1 when the book was closed.

"Speculation is inevitable because almost every Premier League manager could be put in the frame," Clark said. "But to say England are about to appoint me is going too far. I haven't had any contact with the Football Association, either officially or unofficially."

Herzog brands Bayern as 'vain superstars'

Bayern Munich were branded "vain superstars" by one of their own players on the eve of their second-leg Uefa Cup tie at Nottingham Forest, writes Alan Nixon.

Bayern's Austrian midfielder, Andy Herzog, who is currently seeking a transfer, said: "This team is a bunch of vain superstars. Nobody wants to do the dirty work during the games. If anybody dares to do different, it is looked on as a sign of weakness."

Gary Speed's hopes of appearing in Sunday's Coca-Cola Cup final at Wembley still hang in the balance after visiting a specialist today. The Leeds midfielder suffered a fractured cheekbone in an FA Cup tie with Port Vale last month and was originally expected to be out around three months.

But Speed is desperately keen to play in the final against Aston Villa and his manager Wilkinson has to decide whether to risk the Welsh international. After the doctor's verdict yesterday, Wilkinson said: "All I can say at this stage is that I can't rule Gary out."

Wilkinson decided not to chance him in Sunday's 3-2 draw with Everton, although his gifted midfielder could have a short-term solution by wearing a protective mask similar to the one worn effectively by Paul Gascoigne.

And his experience could be a key factor in the club's bid to secure a place in Europe for the second successive season.

Leeds have a busy week in the run-up to Wembley and face Liverpool at Anfield tomorrow in an FA Cup quarter-final replay.

However, if Speed is to have a run-out before the final, it is more likely to come the following day when the reserves travel to Stoke in the Pootins League. Speed was one of a number of regulars missing in the match against Everton, mainly through injury and suspension as Leeds fielded five players aged 21 or under.

Their influential captain, Gary McAllister, will definitely face Liverpool after being ordered to rest by his manager while the injured pair, Tony Yeboah and Tony Dorigo, could also return.

The central defender David Wetherall will again be missing as he completes his two-match ban as Leeds aim to take a step closer to another Wembley appearance.

Bolton yesterday agreed terms with Aston Villa to sign the former England Under-21 defender Bryan Small, who will sign on a free transfer subject to a routine medical.

The Bolton manager, Colin Todd, who has been searching for several months to find a left-sided defender, said: "Several clubs were in the hunt for Bryan, including Nottingham Forest, and we are delighted he has agreed to come here."

Small will go straight into Bolton's squad for tomorrow night's Premiership home match with Tottenham Hotspur when a win would lift the Burnden Park side off bottom place for the first time in four months.

The French coach, Aimé Jacquet, continued to omit his English exiles Eric Cantona and David Ginola when he named a squad of 16 to play Belgium in a warm-up match for Euro 96 on 27 March. The pair were left out even though two key midfielders, Youri Djorkaeff and Vincent Guerin, are injured. The Paris St-Germain defender Alain Roche, who has missed most of the season with a serious knee injury, has been recalled.

General Anghel Iordanescu, coach of European Championship finalists Romania, resigned yesterday, saying his allegations of match rigging in local championships had been ignored.

"I want to give up training the national team because I have repeatedly warned about match rigging, and measures to redress [that situation] have been delayed," Iordanescu said.

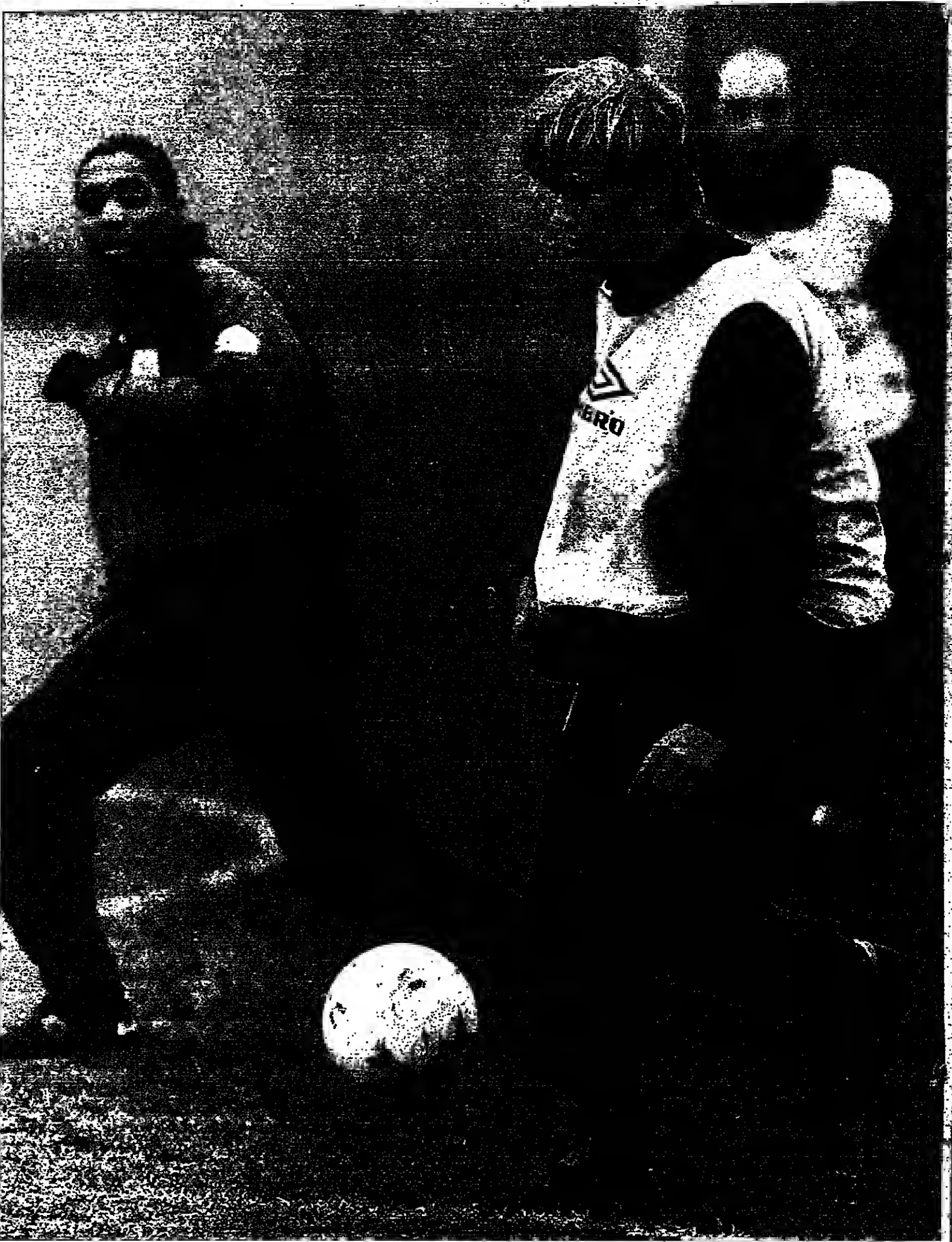
Romania will compete alongside Spain, Bulgaria and France in Euro 96 Group B, which is based in Newcastle and Leeds.

More upset for Bayern yesterday came when Lothar Matthäus was dropped from the Germany squad for the 27 March game against Denmark, raising doubts whether the former German captain will be called up for the European Championship this summer.

Glenn Moore, page 23



The success story of the championship was Scotland. In Italy they were awful, on paper they were moderate, but a well balanced back-row and gifted half-backs can take you a long way in rugby. Mark Evans, the Saracens coach, gives a critical overview of the Five Nations.



Bryan Roy (left) watches his Nottingham Forest team-mate, Alf Inge Haaland, in training for their Uefa Cup match tonight Photograph: Emphics

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD in association with

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No. 2938, Tuesday 19 March By Astrid Monday's Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

ACROSS

- Depari humorously as insect's let out and away (6,3)
- One who comes out about living? (4)
- Bend box accommodating old women (1,2,3)
- CLA has penalty imposed because of money (9)
- Blunder trap, Irish animal (7)
- Moral quibble which has little gravity (7)
- Intimate his changes after taking a new drug (13)
- Sue, junior, sins grievously, revealing a harmful nature (13)

DOWN

- British hooligan gets American carriage (8)
- Young reporter catches one VIP over description of plague (7)
- Convict in hat is working the fields (7)
- Show there's no blame for old copper damaging plate (9)
- One adhesive said to be suitable for home use? (5)
- Time to beg for work (4)
- Pleased to be put back in the dark? (9)

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Lottery money sought to fund future success

Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

British athletics is submitting a major National Lottery bid this week which could transform the parlous financial position of the sport in this country and underpin the development of elite performers through to the year 2002.

The bid, which seeks several million pounds in funding spread over the next six years, has been put together by Mike Whittingham, the former Olympic 400 metres hurdler who now coaches athletes such as Roger Black and acts as a consultant for the British Athletic Federation.

It seeks to establish a co-ordinated programme of services for elite and developing athletes which will provide everything from medical back-up to funding for training breaks and competitive opportunities.

Such an idea has been mooted in the past, but has floundered on two main points. The first has been a straightforward lack of funding - at last Saturday's BAF annual meeting, the outgoing treasurer, John Lister, announced an operating loss of £174,000 for last year and warned of "painful" years ahead.

The second vexed area has been the linking of such services with undertakings for elite athletes to take part in Britain's major televised meetings, an arrangement which was met with some suspicion within the sport.

Whittingham's proposal was developed through discussions with the BAF executive chairman, Peter Radford, the director of coaching, Malcolm Arnold, the chief medical officer, Dr Malcolm Brown, and the athletes' consultative group, headed by Black and Geoff Parsons. It intends to provide sufficient funding for the programme to exist on its own.

"British athletics can no longer rely on ebb and flow of the market place," Whittingham said. "In the past it has been a Catch-22 situation - the federation has had to look after elite performers because they bring in TV and commercial money, and the cake simply wasn't big enough to go round."

"The idea behind this programme is that becomes separate from the commercial side. It allows services to stand on their own two feet. And if athletes can see that, they will be only too willing to build a closer partnership with the sport."

Whittingham envisages that around 1,000 athletes would benefit from the programme over a six-year period that encompasses 43 major championships, including two Olympic Games. It would chime in with the philosophy of government assistance which has been operating with increasing success in countries such as Portugal, Spain and France.

"Everyone is wondering where the next Linford Christie, Sally Gunnell or Colin Jackson is going to come through," Whittingham said. "They are going to come through from this programme."

The initiative is timed to fit in with the widening of Lottery funding from capital to revenue projects which was announced in principle in February.

Whittingham attended the launch of the Prime Minister's sporting initiative, Raising The Game, in July and took the opportunity to hand John Major a synopsis of his plan.

He has since made presentations alongside Arnold, to both the Minister for Sport, Iain Sproat, and the Shadow Minister for Sport, Tom Pendrey.

"We had very positive feedback from both of them," Whittingham said.

Bruno waits as Tyson marches on

Boxing

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

Frank Bruno was considering retirement when he arrived back in London yesterday, as the world champion, Mike Tyson, contemplated more riches and more glory.

"I'm not too sure," he said when asked whether he planned to retire after losing his World Boxing Council title. "I'll answer that in a couple of weeks' time. I'm going to try to spend some

time with my family, relax, just chill out, and recharge my batteries."

In Las Vegas, however, the talk was of unification of the belts, with Tyson aiming at the World Boxing Association champion, Bruce Seldon, at the MGM Grand on 13 July, followed by South Africa's International Boxing Federation heavyweight champion, Frans Botha, who first has to meet former champion Michael Moorer.

Botha, who tested positive for

steroids after his title victory over Axel Schulz in December, yesterday threw down the gauntlet, declaring: "Tyson's strong and powerful, but he has no skill. I'm the white Muhammad Ali."

Britain's Lennox Lewis, by virtue of Friday's New Jersey court ruling, is next in line for the WBC title, and should find himself back at No 1 in the April list of rankings, although a re-vitalised Oliver McCall is now jostling him for pole position to take on Tyson.

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